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THE EPISTLE OF PRIESTHOOD

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THE EPISTLE OF
PRIESTHOOD

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

BY

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EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF S. ALBANS

LATE FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

QUOD itaque Redemptoris nostri conspicuum fuit, in sacramenta transivit: et ut fides excellentior esset ac firmior, visioni doctrina successit, cuius auctoritatem supernis illuminata radiis credentium corda sequerentur.

S. LEO.

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PREFACE

I AM indebted to the family of the late Principal T. C. Edwards for the loan of a manuscript commentary on the Epistle. The translation "on the Godward side" (which was the germ of what I have attempted to express concerning priesthood) I heard many years ago in a sermon at Cambridge by Canon G. H. Whitaker. I thank Messrs. G. M. Edwards, J. H. A. Hart, C. Jenkins, and W. R. Matthews, for help and encouragement; Dr. Bethune-Baker for corrections he kindly furnished; and especially Mr. S. Kirshbaum who has lavished time and thought on my behalf. If in spite of his pains the argument is still obscure, the summary on pp. 298, 299 may perhaps prove serviceable as a clue. I would also acknowledge with gratitude the friendly interest and singular forbearance of my publishers, to whose experience I have had continual recourse.

A. NAIRNE.

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON,
August 1913.

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Religion

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THE EPISTLE OF PRIESTHOOD

CHAPTER I

DATE AND PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

Criticism of the Epistle descends from Origen—But Rome's evidence excludes Pauline authorship—Modern criticism dates it late and treats it as sermon rather than letter—Yet inquiry may be reopened—It seems to have been a real letter, written to a small group of Hellenistic Jews who had become imperfect Christians and were proposing to abandon the reformed faith and to make a fresh start in the Church of their fathers—They were urged to do this by the outbreak of the Jewish war with Rome—Objections to this hypothesis—The Epistle's high doctrine of Christ—But the high doctrine now appears to have been the primitive doctrine—The Epistle represents a developed expression of primitive faith.

FROM the fifth century to the sixteenth S. Paul was generally accepted as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth the Pauline authorship was questioned, and some other name was sought from the Pauline circle in the New Testament. That search is now given up, and most readers are content to be ignorant of the author's name, while they recognize even more clearly than their predecessors the canonical value of the Epistle. It is no longer looked upon as one of the witnesses to S. Paul's theology, nor yet as representing a theology

derived from him. S. Paul is indeed behind it, but so is the primitive Galilean tradition. It stands in its own peculiar position between S. Paul and S. John in the developement of apostolic theology; not independent, for none of the New Testament books is absolutely independent of the others; yet a particular and primary document.

These three stages of critical opinion were anticipated by Origen (cent. iii.), and have been in a sense due to him. Eusebius (cent. iii.-iv.) tells us in his *Ecclesiastical History* (vi. 13, 14) how a tradition of S. Paul's authorship was held in the Church of Alexandria, and how Clement of Alexandria (cent. ii.-iii.) had criticized it. He then shews (vi. 25) how Origen declared it impossible that S. Paul could have been the writer in the strict sense—any one who could discern style would admit that; yet the matter of the Epistle was apostolic, and there could be no objection to calling it S. Paul's. The thoughts might have come from him; they might have been worked up by a disciple of his; Clement (of Rome) or Luke (both names had been already suggested) might have been that disciple, but it was impossible to decide upon any one name—"who actually wrote the Epistle God only knows."

This implies a more immediate connexion with S. Paul than most readers would recognize now; it represents, in fact, the second of the stages of opinion mentioned above. But Origen does not insist on his suggestion. It provided a possible reconciliation of tradition and scholarship, but it touched the minor point only. The important thing was that "the thoughts of the Epistle are wonderful and not secondary to the

acknowledged apostolic writings,"¹ *i.e.* the Epistle was worthy of its own place in the Canonical Scriptures. The most determined opponent of the Pauline derivation of the Epistle, though he find the strongest contrast between its character and original Paulinism, still allows that S. Paul's whole teaching lies behind it, and there is little difference between such a view and that of Origen. Perhaps we might consider that Origen would agree for his own part with most of the arguments of the modern critic, while the Alexandrian Church of his day felt much the same about the matter as the Church at large does in England, preferring a compromise to a denial, and (being impatient of the subtleties of scholarship) smoothing away the compromise by degrees to an assertion which would allow the Epistle to be quoted as S. Paul's without cumbrous qualifications. That is what did happen at Alexandria. Origen's refinements were ignored, his permission was adopted. The easy habit spread to the rest of the world, and the Pauline authorship became the new tradition of the Church at large.

But it was a new tradition. While the Alexandrian scholars were discussing the question, Tertullian (cent. ii.-iii.) quoted the Epistle as "Barnabae titulus ad Hebraeos," and claimed authority for it, but hardly canonical authority; Barnabas was a man of apostolic society and discipline, and an Epistle bearing his name was at any rate more nearly canonical than the Shepherd of Hermas.² No strong claim this, and no clear

¹ Καὶ οὐ δεύτερα τῶν ἀποστολικῶν ὁμολογουμένων γραμμάτων. Ἐπιστολικῶν might refer in a technical sense to S. Paul, but it need not. Westcott says, "What [Clement and Origen] were concerned to affirm for the book was Pauline, or, we may say more correctly, apostolic authority."

² *De pudicitia*, 20.

testimony to a long tradition. It might have been the common account of the Epistle in Africa. It is more likely that Tertullian had found the Epistle so described in a MS. that came from some Greek Church,¹ and, wherever that may have been, the ascription to Barnabas looks as though it arose in the same way as the Alexandrian references to Clement or Luke. They were the guesses of a literary Church where style was considered; this was the guess of a simpler society which only noticed the subject-matter, and argued that the Levite of the New Testament was likely to be the author of the Epistle which dealt with priesthood.

Thus at Alexandria we find traces of a tradition of S. Paul's authorship. We find them, however, only in a criticism which proves the tradition faulty while it makes subtle distinctions and defends its indirect truth. Out of this apology grew the later, general acceptance of S. Paul as author. That acceptance has no other recommendation.

In Tertullian we catch a glimpse of another tradition assigning the Epistle to Barnabas; it is but a glimpse; we know not whence this tradition comes; it has the appearance of an inference from the subject of the Epistle.

At Rome we meet with more substantial evidence. In the letter from Rome to Corinth, commonly called the first Epistle of Clement, and almost certainly written by or through Clement in about the year 96 A.D., Hebrews is quoted. The quotations are lengthy and precise. The style and still more the thought of Clement are so different as to make it plain that the

¹ Cf. Zahn, *Einleitung*, viii, 45 (ed. 2).

Alexandrian guess of his authorship was mistaken, but it is no less plain that he knew the Epistle; the Roman Church probably possessed a copy of it. He never speaks of S. Paul as the author, nor do his quotations suggest that he gave it anything like canonical authority. That is little in itself, but is remarkable when associated with other Roman evidence and Western evidence dependent on Rome. Stephen Gobar (a late authority) says that Irenaeus and Hippolytus held the Epistle "not Paul's." Otherwise the claim of Pauline authorship is never mentioned in the West during the first three centuries. Jerome and Augustine (cent. iv.-v.) recognize the Epistle as canonical and allow it to be quoted as S. Paul's, but are well aware of their Church's tradition to the contrary. And that tradition has left its trace even on the ecclesiastical literature of the seventh century.¹ All this must have sprung from Rome's primitive certainty. The greeting, xiii. 24, from "those of Italy" connects Hebrews with Italy. As early as 96 A.D. Rome used the Epistle. It is the Pauline Epistles which are traditionally connected with Rome that are especially akin to it. And however that kin-

¹ Isidore of Hispala witnesses to it unconsciously when he "makes the number of churches to which the Apostle wrote *seven*, and enumerates them, including Hebrews, not observing that he thus makes them eight" (Alford, who cites the Latin passages from *In Libros Veteris ac Novi Testamenti Prohoemia*, and *Etymologiae: Liber vi.*, cf. Souter, *Text and Canon of New Testament*, pp. 232, 233). And in another place he expressly mentions the doubts that were or had been felt by "plerisque Latinis."

The peculiar relationship of the Epistle to the rest of Codex Claromontanus is also evidence of persistent Western tradition. Dr. Souter argues that this MS. was written in Sardinia after the island had become part of the Byzantine Empire in the sixth century (*Journal of Theological Studies*, Jan. 1905). If so, it might seem that even so late the Latin canon in Sardinia was enlarged in deference to Eastern prejudice. The peculiar character of the Vulgate translation also waits to be explained.

ship may be explained, the early relationship with Rome seems certain. We may be sure that Rome knew the Epistle from the first, and knew that S. Paul had not written it.¹ To us, as to Origen, its language separates it from him. To us, further differences in thought are apparent which Origen perhaps hardly appreciated. But Rome's witness is really plain enough to supersede all such considerations.

Did Rome know more? If so, she has not told us, and we can but start from her negative. It would be waste of time to register ancient and modern opinions over again. They may be found in various Introductions, and now, admirably arranged, in Dr. Moffatt's *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*. It may suffice to indicate the converging tendencies of modern criticism. The title, "to the Hebrews," is passed over as an early inference from the contents of the Epistle, like the inference which made Barnabas author. A while ago it began to be fashionable to see Gentiles, not Hebrews, as the readers to whom it was addressed. Now that is not pressed; the Epistle is generally dated late, just a few years before Clement used it, and by that time the distinction between Jew

¹ M. A. R. Tucker, in the *Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1913, elaborating Harnack's suggestion that Prisca, or Priscilla, wrote Hebrews, says, "The Roman origin of the Epistle indeed is enshrined in the Roman liturgy. In that liturgy, and in no other, the priesthood of Melchizedek is invoked, and the words are those of the Epistle to the Hebrews—*summus sacerdos Melchisedech*. Moreover, they are recorded in the oldest reference to the Roman Canon, and must take their place by the side of the 'Amen' of Justin as root-words of the Liturgy."

It is perhaps of interest to notice in this connexion that *d* has "summus sacerdos" in v. 10; the Vulgate nowhere uses that phrase, but only "sacerdos" or "pontifex." Cf. Burkitt, *JTS*, Jan. 1908, on "'Chief Priests' in the Latin Gospels."

and Gentile in the Church had been forgotten; these "Hebrews" may have been either Jews or Gentiles, it matters not. In the same way it was fashionable a while ago to make Rome, or at least Italy, the destination. But now the tendency is to leave that question also unanswered. There is connexion with Rome, but by the end of the first century most Hellenistic church activity was connected with Rome. Whether this connexion was more or less close matters little for the interpretation of a treatise like Hebrews.

For that is the main result of modern investigations. Hebrews is late, artificial, reflective; a treatise rather than a letter; a sermon belonging to the age of sermons. It smells of the study, not the open air of life where history is being made. Not the Temple at Jerusalem, but the Tabernacle in the Pentateuch is the background of its scenery. Weariness of the Christian faith already growing old, not the attraction of an ancestral ceremonial from which it is at last necessary to make a final rupture, is the danger. Nor is it any longer desired to choose an author from the too limited list of New Testament names.

"This anonymous epistle, like the Melchizedek whom it describes and allegorises, is *ἀγενεαλόγητος*, a lonely and impressive phenomenon in the literature of the first century, which bears even fewer traces of its aim than of its author. . . . He left great prose to some little clan of early Christians, but who he was and who they were, it is not possible, with such materials as are at our disposal, to determine. No conjecture rises above the level of plausibility. We cannot say that if the *autor ad Hebraeos* had never lived or written, the course of

early Christianity would have been materially altered. He was not a personality of Paul's commanding genius. He did not make history or mark any epoch. He did not even, like the anonymous authors of Matthew's gospel and the Fourth gospel, succeed in stamping his writing on the mind of the early church at large. But the later church was right in claiming a canonical position for this unique specimen of Alexandrine thought playing upon the primitive gospel, although the reasons upon which the claim was based were generally erroneous" (*ILNT*, pp. 442, 443).

Thus vividly Dr. Moffatt describes the Epistle from the modern point of view. This judgement has been reached by laborious investigation in which generations of scholars have co-operated, testing and correcting suggestions and setting details more and more clearly in the light of New Testament learning as a whole. It has the weight of accumulated reason, and it would be silly to oppose it without serious deliberation. Yet there is something to be said on the other side. There are indications of the Epistle being earlier, intenser, more influential than Dr. Moffatt thinks, of its belonging to the creative class of New Testament writings rather than to the merely reflective. It is true that an undertone of "old age" runs through it. Its Gospel has begun "at the end of these days"; "that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away." Not only the ancient Law and worship but the whole ancient world seem worn out, and the author with his friends turn away to seek the only satisfaction that remains, "the city which is to come." And that undertone is perhaps the most impressive note to an age like ours

which is burdened with its scholarship, still more with its consciousness of ignorance, and begins to be weary of its civilization. To such an age the undertone of the Epistle seems to answer to its own weakness; it accepts this author as sympathetic, "able to bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is encompassed with infirmity," and it turns to S. Paul to be braced up. But in reality this undertone is but the counterpart of a vigorous hope already setting out on a new stage in the journey of life. Some things are ageing, but the author's faith is youthful—it is no stylist's trick that makes him choose the epithet *νέας* "young" instead of *καινῆς* "new" for the Covenant in the heavenly Jerusalem (xii. 24). All through there is a sense of strain and crisis, of a new hope being at stake, of a fresh and unexpected fulfilment of the promise of the Coming of Christ. Of course we do use such language also of these days of ours, but it is difficult to make it sound quite real, and it may be that the Epistle to the Hebrews would win a new importance in our eyes if something happened to change the vague "dissatisfaction" which tempts us, as Dr. Moffatt says it tempted the Christians of the second decade after the fall of Jerusalem, "to abandon the worship and membership of the church, as if it were a philosophic school or a cult whose capacities they had exhausted," into an imminent resistance unto blood (xii. 4).

But if we venture to question the conclusions of modern criticism taken as a whole, we shall not be so unwise as to ignore them. They have simplified the inquiry. They have cleared much lumber out of the way. We need linger no more over the search for

the name of the author, for the exact place of writing or of destination. We shall not seek for obscure hints of the author's knowledge of the still existing Temple. And there is one phrase in Dr. Moffatt's description which suggests further help. The author "left," he says, "great prose to some little clan of early Christians." Many readers of Hebrews must have reflected that such a letter, with its exquisite style and its Alexandrine terms of philosophy, could hardly have been intended for a large and mixed assembly. And if that be allowed, we need not delay over Deissmann's opinion (in his *Bible Studies*) that Hebrews is no real letter but a treatise. Wrede in *Das literarisch Rätsel des Hebräerbriefs* recognized the characteristics of a letter, but said that these characteristics are crowded together at the end, and are the addition of some manipulator who wished to give the original document the appearance of a genuine letter of S. Paul. But there is no need for so complicated an explanation. Let the first readers be "a little clan," and let that little clan be no church, not even the church at so-and-so's house with its complement of members from various classes, but understand it to be but a group of scholarly men like the author. Then the whole Epistle, last chapter and all, is accepted quite naturally as an intimate letter, written at a particular time for a particular purpose in the style which would be most unaffected within that exclusive circle of Hellenistic thinkers. They were exclusive, we remember. The author rebukes them for not going to worship with their comrades in the faith (x. 25), and bids them be dutiful towards their ecclesiastical superiors (xiii. 17). An exclusive circle, an artificial one, perhaps, though the

style of the Epistle is not so artificial as might at first sight appear, and it is certainly written in deadly earnest. Consider these phrases: "How shall we escape?" (ii. 3); "In that he himself hath suffered in his trial, he is able to help those who are in their stress of trial (ii. 18); "If we hold fast the boldness and the boast of the hope" (iii. 6); "Let us fear lest any one of you seem to have fallen short" (iv. 1); "For help in time of need" (iv. 16); "For the discernment of the noble from the base" (v. 14); "It is impossible to renew unto repentance those who have fallen away, seeing that they are crucifying to themselves the Son of God and putting him to open shame" (vi. 4 ff.); "That ye become not sluggish" (vi. 12); "Until a season of reformation" (ix. 10); "The blood of the Christ shall cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (ix. 14); "Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (ix. 22); "Not yet have ye resisted unto blood" (xii. 4); "A certain fearful expectation of judgement and a jealousy of fire about to devour the adversaries"; "Of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God" (x. 27, 29); "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (x. 31); "Cast not away your bold freedom—of endurance have ye need—yet but a very little while and he that is coming shall come and shall not tarry—we are not of the shrinking back unto perdition but of faith for the winning of life" (x. 35–39); "And there is a faith, for in it the elders had witness borne to them"¹ (xi. 1 f.)—and read here the whole of the following roll of heroes with their faith, endurance, hope and honour, and then the

¹ ἐμαρτυρήθησαν, almost "were enrolled among the martyrs."

encouragement to the contest at the beginning of ch. xii., with the example of the champion, Jesus: "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside all cumbrance and the sin which doth so closely cling to us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the captain and consummator of the faith, who for the joy that was set before him despised the shame and endured the cross . . . that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls." Add to these: "The consecrated state outside of which no one shall see the Lord" (xii. 14); "Ye are come unto Mount Sion . . . signifieth the removal of those things that are shaken, as of things manufactured, that those things which are shaken not may remain . . . for our God is a consuming fire" (xii. 22-29); "Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (xiii. 13), and the final prayer (xiii. 20 f.) with its aorist infinitive, concentrating the whole weight of the Epistle on the one definite and hard duty at which the readers hesitated.

This is a long list of significant phrases. They gain some force by being set in juxtaposition, but to an attentive reader they are still more impressive in their context; indeed, they are so interwoven with the whole purpose of the Epistle that it has been difficult to select them, and their number might have been increased. Of course some of them, taken by themselves, are less striking than others. It is easy to tone them down if we start from a prejudice about the Epistle's rhetoric, or if we allow long repetition of some of the words to blunt their edge. For instance, the references to "blood" are apt to mean less than they should if we have indulged

ourselves in a pietistic use of such expressions, or have coldly discussed the meaning of blood in Semitic sacrifice. Archbishop Laud began his address to the people at his execution with Heb. xii. 1, 2; the emotion of such a "temptation" would better serve the proper understanding of such words. So again the routine of discussion of the difficult passage, vi. 4-6, is apt to dull our sense of its extreme severity. Take it how we will, it is hardly possible to accept such language as part of the canonical message of forgiveness unless it is recognized as belonging to a moment of tremendous crisis.

Even so much difficulty remains. "It is impossible to renew unto repentance those who have fallen away"—it is only by pressing tenses and participles in a scarcely natural degree that we can escape the conclusion that the author meant to deny the possibility of repentance to apostates. We may prefer to take it that he merely denies the power of man to bring such persons to repentance. There is more force in the contention that he lays down no general law, but simply asserts that at that particular time, in the immediate stress, no measures could be taken for the recovery of the lapsed; that would indeed be a strong piece of testimony to the reality of the storm in which the letter was composed; it would take it very decidedly out of the region of sermons. But nothing would quite justify the severity unless it could be shewn that there was something in the very nature of the contemplated case which made it hopeless. Now if the "repentance" itself were the error; if the hope of repentance from dead works (*i.e.* an unprofitable life) to serve the living God (*i.e.* the God whom the Jews had always worshipped) were itself

involved in "falling away" (*i.e.* in breaking allegiance already rendered to Jesus as Christ); if, that is to say, return to Judaism was contemplated by these readers as the beginning of a simpler better life, then the whole paragraph would run with inevitable logic.

Supposing these men to have been brought up in Judaism, we shall readily add that their Judaism cannot have been of the ordinary, legal type. They were Hellenists, at least touched with philosophy. When a further examination of the letter shews us, as it clearly does, that their Christian faith was, so far, imperfect; that they had recognized the Lord Jesus as a Teacher, a Prophet; yet, though they had indeed accepted Him as the Christ, they had never understood what that title meant to S. Paul, or S. John, or the simple credulous believer; then we shall be prepared to suppose that they had joined themselves to the Christian Church as to a reformed Judaism, that they had found the simplicity of its faith and worship, the crudity of its Messianic expectation—so unlike Alexandrine piety—uncongenial,¹ and that when this letter was written, things may have happened which were inducing them to question whether, after all, the reformation was worth while. After all—we catch an echo of their words at the end of ch. v.—after all, they say, we cannot settle these

¹ Borrowing language from Baron von Hügel we might thus describe the crisis. These men had reached in Judaism the speculative stage of religion; in Christianity they had come in contact with a higher religion, but one that was still in the earlier external and sensible stage. What they should do is to go forward to the volitional or mystical stage in Christianity; what they are inclined to do is to fall back to the most childish stage of all—merely institutional Judaism. The author helps them by interpreting in a somewhat unexpected way the institutional ground-plan of Christianity, treating it with exacter science, and shewing how thus treated it does run up into eternal life (*The Mystical Element of Religion*, i. p. 52 ff.).

questions. We need a teacher as much as others; we need the milk of babes; and in a simple following of the faith of our fathers there is opportunity for choosing and practising a noble life without meddling with questions of reform and subtleties of dogma. To which their friend answers that they cannot go back upon their years like that; having come so far they can never be children again; this choice between right and wrong, the noble and the base, is not the simple task they imagine; it requires the discipline of manhood, and can never be accomplished by men who shirk the responsibilities of manly judgement. Besides—and here comes in the thought which he never allows to slumber throughout the letter—these friends of his have rendered allegiance to Jesus as Christ; whatever they think of the Christ that obligation of honour—the *καλόν* he so continually refers to—remains; it is impossible in the very nature of things that they should make a fresh start in Judaism, renewing themselves to repentance and beginning an innocent, simple life anew, when the very act is a breaking of vows and a dishonouring of the Master whom they have once accepted.

It is significant that the points taken as representing the foundation of penitence and faith are all consistent with Judaism. “Doctrine of washings”—how unnatural are the attempts to explain this plural as referring to Christian Baptism; “imposition of hands, resurrection of dead, eternal judgement”—all this belonged to the creed of a Pharisaic Jew who accepted the whole of the Old Testament. The accusative *διδασχῆν*, in B and the Old Latin, is not necessary to this explanation of the sentence, but it makes it sharper, and the genitive

διδαχῆς has the air of a correction designed to bring the passage into line with Christian feeling; the accusative makes return to Jewish doctrine the foundation of a new life, the genitive points to "repentance," faith, instruction, as all alike the sequel of that initial impulse which draws the unbeliever to the Church. And so far as there is anything in this grammatical point, the genitive emphasizes the technical meaning of *μετάνοια* "repentance." Absolute and abrupt repentance was the starting-point of the Gospel: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand." Repentance, so absolute and abrupt that its repetition might seem inconceivable, was the regular mode of entrance into the Church. That is the technical sense of the word, and it certainly does not suit the explanation here offered. But why confine the author to that technical sense? His letter, its purpose and its language, stand in a peculiar position in the New Testament. Philo speaks of "repentance" in a very different sense from this technical one, and, whether studied by him or not, Philo represents the Alexandrine piety in which both he and his readers were at home. There seems no good reason to deny a wider sense to the word in this context.

That the Jew Philo does so nearly represent their piety is itself strong reason for considering author and readers to have been Jews by descent and education. If there is anything in the explanation just proposed of ch. vi., they actually were such. There is another phrase in the immediate context which points in the same direction, τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον, "the account of the beginning of the Christ." That is not a good expression for elementary Christian teaching, but

it is for the doctrine of Christhood as revealed in Judaism. The recognition of this doctrine runs through the Epistle. Enough for the moment to point out that at the beginning of chapter i., again in chapter iii., and again in xi. 26, the author takes for granted that the name "Christ" was given in Israel's history to the king or to the nation, that our Lord received this name by inheritance from the imperfect Christs of old, that, in a word, the doctrine of the beginning of Christhood would naturally mean the instruction of every Jewish child.

The same thing may be noticed about sacrifice. Certain ideas about sacrifice underlie the Epistle, as for instance the use and significance of the blood, which were misunderstood almost as soon as it passed out of the hands of its first readers. In exegesis, and even in liturgical application, its sacrificial language has been understood as a metaphorical expression of S. Paul's phrase "bought with a price." But that idea is absent from Hebrews, and in its place it employs a set of sacrificial terms which bear their own proper sense, and, so interpreted, fill the Epistle with deep intention. The researches of Robertson Smith and his successors into the history of Semitic religion have enabled us in these later days to recover this lost interpretation. We still comprehend these Semitic ideas but vaguely. We see that Hebrews agrees with Leviticus, that in both books the blood stands for life, not for destruction, and that cleansing and approach to God are the benefits of which sacrifice is the means. But those who allow the Epistle to have arisen in a Jewish circle, feel that the author and his friends enjoyed these ideas by the intuition of ancestral training. They could, if we might question them, do

more to clear our minds about Semitic sacrifice than all our researches have accomplished yet. They had learned the essential truths as an Englishman learns the mind of the Church from the Catechism in his childhood.

The much discussed verses ix. 16, 17, point in the same direction. Here it seems at first sight that the author inserts into a context, where he has used the Septuagint word *διαθήκη* in its Old Testament sense of "covenant," an illustration in which it bears the meaning "will, testament." In Gal. iii. 15 it perhaps does bear that meaning, and it must be confessed that most commentators so understand it here. Yet there is some *a priori* improbability in such an abrupt variation, and on closer examination the Greek shews peculiarities which suggest that the author is speaking of the theory of covenants in general being ratified over sacrifice. The death of the covenanter must be "represented"; a covenant is ratified "over dead bodies"; since "the idea is" that it does not bind when the covenanter is living. These niceties of language have often been noticed, but are not commonly accepted as important. They become however more striking when it is noticed that the author is not thinking only of a general theory, but is illustrating the particular action of our Lord; he has the Lord's "renewing of the Covenant" in mind. How could an allusion to our Lord's words and acts at the Last Supper be better expressed than by *θάνατον ἀνάγκη φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου*, "there needs must be a sacramental representation of death on the part of him who transacts the covenant"?

If this explanation of "Covenant" language be allowed, we have here again a more subtle indication of

the author's training in Jewish principles of thought than mere familiarity with the written Old Testament would account for. When that becomes a presupposition the Epistle seems full of indications of like character. Such is the phrase in xii. 23, "the church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven." Not only does "first-born" seem to mean Old Testament saints, but "church" is a term reserved in this Epistle, as it is in the first section of Acts, for the Jewish "ecclesia," and is never applied specially to the Christian Church.¹ The description of priesthood at the beginning of ch. v. has a tenderness in it which may of course be merely artistic, but may, on the contrary, spring from the heart of one who has known sympathetic priests of the old religion—and that would be possible without visiting Jerusalem. So with the yearning recollection of the golden splendour of the Pentateuchal rites in chapter ix., and the confession in chapter x. of the impossibility of taking away sin through the blood of bulls and goats, while yet there was a "remembering" of sin even in the formalities of the worn-out worship. There is a tenderness to Judaism to which even the modern reader cannot be deaf,

¹ Acts i.-vii. In ii. 47 τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ is a false reading; in v. 11 ἐκκλησία may mean "the assembly" without any technical sense.

In S. Matt. xvi. 18 ἐκκλησία seems to have a natural and impressive force if it refers to no new Church, but to the one Church which has been and shall still be; "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfil." The same idea runs through the Odes of Solomon; it even seems possible that the difficult Ode 19 might be better understood of the birth of the Christ or of the Christian Church from the Jewish Church than of the birth of our Lord at Bethlehem. Cf. Burkitt's note on Mt. xviii. 17, *Evangelion da-mepharreshe*, ii. p. 275. He thinks that the rendering of *S* requires us to "suppose that the translator understood our Lord to mean by ἐκκλησία not Holy Church, but some less august assembly appropriate to the social organization of the day (cf. Mt. v. 22)."

and the whole argument of priesthood in the Epistle turns upon the belief that there had been a true priesthood all through Israel's history, surviving through and beyond the mechanical priesthood of the sons of Aaron. Each separate point may be explained by literary art, but taken together they are not so easily explained in that way, especially when it is perceived that the sincere practical purpose of the letter is more conspicuous than its art.

So we conclude that the author had been brought up in Judaism; that he wrote to a little company of friends who had been brought up in Judaism; that the title "To Hebrews" may be accepted as a fair description of these men if we take it in its later general sense instead of confining it to Jews of Jerusalem, or at any rate Hebrew speaking Jews. If it were as old as the letter itself perhaps it ought to mean that, but it may be a true title and yet a comparatively later one. And of course we cannot say these men were Hebrew-speaking Jews of Jerusalem. They might have lived at Jerusalem, for those passages which refuse to fit the Church of Jerusalem (ii. 3, vi. 10) might be applied to these or those of the brethren dwelling there. But the broad clear view we get is of Hellenistic Jews, now imperfect Christians, who are exposed to some particular temptation to give up their new faith and make common cause with their own nation. The letter is written to prevent this, and yet not so much to prevent it in a negative way as to induce them to make a choice at a crisis, to do some special hard duty which will settle their allegiance and carry them forward into a more perfect faith in their Lord.

This choice will evidently be a bold one, involving danger, even risk of life. Yet it is difficult to escape the conviction that this is not the real bitterness of the trial. There is something more subtle, a *εὐπερίστατος ἁμαρτία*, whether that means a sin that clings like a garment, or a specious sin, one that carries a certain *éclat* with it; undoubtedly it is one that involves a "deception" (iii. 13), one that may result from an undisciplined distinguishing of what is noble from what is base (v. 14). The right choice will bring shame even more than dangers (xii. 2, xiii. 13, cf. x. 33, xi. 26, ii. 11, xi. 16), and it will separate from the old association of Israel: "let us go forth to him outside the camp bearing his shame" (xiii. 13). In this last quotation the language seems remarkably plain. To make it general and metaphorical is to rob it of its natural force. And this is the less justifiable when it is observed that the author, as he nears the conclusion, concentrates attention on the Christian body, its separated family life, and the one Master to whom it owes allegiance. The prayer in xiii. 20, 21 (which has indeed lost its sharp significance in the later text) stands out clear in its definite appeal only when led up to by the series of precepts in the earlier paragraphs of the chapter.

Hellenistic liberal Jews, who have become imperfect Christians; who are now being pressed to return to Judaism, and feel bound by a kind of honour to do so; who are urged in this letter to make a hard choice which involves a definite break with Judaism, and will carry them forward to a true faith in the divine Christ—when did these men face such a trial? Is it possible to define the events which produced this letter? Hort in *Judaistic Christianity* repeated an old answer to this

question. Is it only the felicity of his phrase that makes us return to it so often after wandering in the maze of criticism, or is it because he really saw the field of history vividly?

“The day of the Lord which the writer to the Hebrews saw drawing nigh had already begun to break in blood and fire when St. John sent his Apocalypse to the Gentile Churches of Asia.”

The Jewish war with Rome was beginning. Appeal was being made to all Jews to band together in defence of Jerusalem and the ancient creed. That involved a Messianism which was contrary to the tradition of the Christian Church, and Christian Jews could not consent to it. These “philosophic liberals” who had never thoroughly embraced the Christian tradition were moved by the appeal. It was a call to active sacrifice for faith which would cut to the heart of such cloistered men. They had joined the “reformed branch” of their Church, and now they doubted whether there were anything in that reformation which made so very much difference after all. Perhaps there were some things in the “new synagogue” (x. 25) which they positively disliked. At any rate they were inclined to give it all up and make common cause with the patriots. As we try to read between the lines of the letter we almost fancy that this seemed to them the natural thing to do; this was staying where they were. The letter is a call to them to make a decisive movement to come out. So deeply were their roots planted in Judaism, so imperfect was their Christianity, so strongly did association pull them backward. Their compatriots bade them choose as Electra bade Chrysothemis:

ἐπειθ' ἐλοῦ γε θάτερόν τι φρονεῖν κακῶς
ἢ τῶν φίλων φρονούσα μὴ μνήμην ἔχειν

“choose then, one way or the other—it has come to that; either to be imprudent zealots, or keeping prudence to lose the very memory of friends.” And they feared that stigma of cold pious prudence more than threats. One however who was their friend in their new life as well as in their old, who could sympathize with their affection, but was stronger, more independent of opinion, and far more deeply-settled in the peace of the new hope, wrote this letter to them. In the conflict of honour he appealed to the simplest honour—“You have sworn allegiance to Jesus as Christ; whatever other claim is made you cannot break that promise.” In the wavering doubt as to whether the new faith was worth the breaking of the unity of the ancient Church, he called them to grasp that faith more wholeheartedly, and learn at last what it really was. “Our Lord Jesus Christ is more, and has achieved more than you have thought possible. Think of Him as a priest, and I will make you understand.” And in the ruining time that seemed like the threatened end of the world, he called them to take a bold step, to break with the past, and so to find a new, young, vigorous life beginning.

That is a background for this Epistle which may at least be tested once more as a hypothesis to work on. It needs no elaborate assurance about details. The author may write from Italy, but if not it makes no difference to the meaning of his letter. His friends may be in Palestine, but it is enough for our purpose to suppose them summoned to Palestine. The sight of the

Temple or the recollection of Levitical ceremonies may have added interest to some passages, but there is no proof of this, nor is the letter more or less weighty for its being so or otherwise; it is the Synagogue from which the break is really to be made. The points in the hypothesis of real importance are the earnest and particular appeal of the letter; the Jewish descent of author and recipients; the connexion with the Roman war; the consequently early date and character of the letter.¹

The paragraph from *Judaistic Christianity* was quoted above for its terse and lively suggestion. An obvious objection to pressing it is the admission, which must be made, that Hort and the school of his day have failed to prove the early date of the Apocalypse. They have however shewn how much there is in the Apocalypse which suits the early date,² and it begins to be seen that the Apocalypse, and other parts of the New Testament also, may have existed in more than one state or stage; an earlier Apocalypse may have been republished with additions and alterations in a later period. But however that may be, the passage was

¹ These points are important for the hypothesis, and in these studies the hypothesis will be adopted, since it would be tedious to make reservations and offer alternatives at each turn. I find it too, after other experiments, impossible to explain all the vividness of the Epistle in any other manner. Yet the hypothesis is after all but a critical conjecture, and for the actual drawing out of the theology of the Epistle little more is required than the recognition that it was written in some particular season of stress to urge some particular friends of the author to do a hard duty from which they shrank, and that this particularity shapes and limits its expression. I should perhaps add that if a much later date were assigned to it I should be puzzled by the stage of doctrinal development which I think may be discerned in it.

² See the fragment of a Commentary with Introduction by Hort, published in 1908. Dr. Sanday, who wrote a preface to this, had in an article in *JTS*, July 1907, agreed with Dr. Swete that the date under Domitian was

quoted as illustration rather than argument. Hebrews has certain affinities with the Apocalypse, but its date does not depend upon the date of the Apocalypse.

What really weighs with the advocates of the late date is the general character of the Epistle, the church life in its background, its developed faith. Of the background of church life we notice the definite indication in iii. 3 that the author and his friends stand twice removed from Gospel days; they are hearers of hearers. But this need not put them far down the stream of time, and we need not be more impressed by it than Origen was. Again the strife between Jew and Gentile does not make itself felt. It is a witness to the greatness of S. Paul that we should be so surprised at this; because this strife filled so much of S. Paul's mind did it fill everyone else's? And besides did not S. Paul's vigour achieve something, and even a little while after his death may not the effects of his championship of the Gentiles have begun to issue in general peace? As a matter of fact the references in the letters to church life and institutions are very few. The Epistle of priesthood pays hardly any attention to the special ministry of sacraments, or even the formal creed of the Christian Church. Such references are as

probable. In this preface he says, "The old impression, of which I have never been able entirely to rid myself, resumes its force. . . . Can we not conceive the Apocalypse rising out of the whirling chaos of the years 68-69 A.D., when the solid fabric of the empire may well have seemed to be really breaking up, more easily than at any other period? And would not the supposition that it did so rise simplify the whole historical situation of the last five-and-thirty years of the first century as nothing else could simplify it?" It must be remembered, as the Dean of Wells insisted in his review of Hort's book, *JTS*, Oct. 1908, that the date of the Apocalypse does not depend on its relation to the author of the Fourth Gospel.

rare as its definite echoes of phrases in earlier apostolic writings. It is its later ecclesiastical use which has confused our minds about this. Its phraseology has been co-ordinated with S. Paul's, and passages have been (justifiably) applied in the developement of liturgical use which originally had another significance, *e.g.* the doctrine of baptism or washings, of laying on of hands (vi. 2), and the "altar" of xiii. 10. It seems as strange that a modern reader should place the Epistle in the times of Clement of Rome, as that the Alexandrians should have thought Clement wrote it. Surely in passing to Clement's Epistle we pass into another world. Could this author have said "our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the 'episcopate'" (Clem. xlv.), or, "take up the letter of blessed Paul the Apostle" (xlvii.)? Could he have used the Phœnix as proof of the Resurrection? And such isolated examples are trifles compared with the whole manner of Clement, his derived, dependent theology. "He is a harmonizer . . . he is essentially 'the Doctor'." Lightfoot shewed the same insight when he wrote that of Clement, as Origen did when he wrote of our Epistle, that its spirit is wonderful, and as primary as the acknowledged apostolical writings.

But besides all this, the developed faith of the Epistle, its high doctrine of Christ, has affected critical minds strongly. The principle of liberal theology has long been this, that the Church's earliest attitude to her Lord was the faith of the disciple in his Teacher, that to this earliest faith the Jewish idea of the Messiah was afterwards added, that contact with the Greek world

brought further reflexion, and a more astonishing theology which may be seen developing in the letters of S. Paul, and then still further in the Johannine doctrine of the Word made flesh. Putting it roughly, we may say that the starting-point is the Sermon on the Mount, and the goal in the New Testament is the prologue to the Fourth Gospel. The difficulties have been to reconcile those other parts of the Synoptic Gospels, which tell of miracles, and strange authority, with the simple rôle of Teacher in the Sermon on the Mount, and again to find time in the apostolic age for the change from the Gospel doctrine of the Lord as Teacher to the doctrine of the eternal, divine Son or Word in Ephesians, Colossians, and S. John. These difficulties have been met by separating parts of the Gospels as the colouring of a later age, and by a tendency to place late not only the Johannine writings but also a certain number of the Pauline Epistles. Of course there have always been some who protested against this, but in spite of their arguments the feeling has been widespread that, on the whole, this critical principle was right. It might not be necessary to carry the process so far down in point of time; development might have gone far even in the lifetime of S. Paul, and development of faith is not objectionable in itself; it is indeed the counterpart to revelation through the Holy Spirit. In fact, while a few attempted logical definition, and made chronological tables, the multitude accepted vaguely the principle of development, and laboured under the misgiving that the chances were always against an early date for a New Testament book. Hence it is but natural that a late date for such an

epistle as Hebrews should be widely accepted. The first chapter has long served the Church as her Epistle for the feast of the Nativity, and every one felt that there was no passage in the whole New Testament which could be better associated with the prologue to S. John's Gospel as the expression of her complete faith in the Incarnation.

And yet another instinctive feeling still existed. However long an interval were granted, would it account for this Teacher of the primitive Gospel being advanced to the divine state of the Incarnate Word? Was there not here something different from development, a passage "into another kind?" And again, could the Sermon on the Mount explain the power of the Cross; was there not something in the Christian faith, whether greater or less, at any rate different from all that teaching or example could lead up to? We understand better now than we did what that obstinate questioning meant. The priority of S. Mark's Gospel, the strange, greater than "reasonable" portrait of Christ therein, the opening of the Jewish apocalypses and the flashes of light thrown by them on this portrait, and now the arguments and suggestions of the apocalyptic school of Gospel critics—all this is changing our mind again about the origin of the Christian faith. And as in the last generation it was not necessary to be a thorough-going liberal in order to be affected by the liberal principles, so now it is possible to suspend much judgement about the apocalyptic school, and yet be convinced of some important things through it; as, for instance, that the very earliest apostolic faith was faith in the Lord Jesus as the apocalyptic divine Christ,

who came from God and was with God, and was himself divine, and would come as the Christ manifest to judge the world.

“It was in the sudden agitation of those few days, in Galilee, and apparently under the lead of Simon Peter, that the decisive step was taken. Without that step the whole would have become but the happy dream of a few months, now ended by a rude awakening to the light of day. But the momentous step once taken, Jesus the Messiah once believed on as Lord in heaven, and the Church could not stop. What followed was not the gradual elevation of Jesus from humanity to deity; it was the gradual analysis of the problem set once for all at the outset, the slow definition of what was involved in this indefinite exaltation of the Messiah. . . . The battle was fought in the controversies of the fourth century—but the problem was fully set by the fishermen apostles when they turned their faces again towards Jerusalem.”

Thus, in 1906, wrote Mr. Ropes in *The Apostolic Age in the Light of Modern Criticism*. He expressed the obstinate instinctive feeling spoken of above. What he asserted most people were sure was true, but they could not shew that it was true. What the apocalyptists have achieved is this—whether or no they have done more, this at least; they have allowed us once more to read the Gospels as a whole, and give full weight to their natural meaning. Then from that natural meaning springs with like propriety this astonishing faith of the earliest Church. From Gospels to Epistles there is no passage “into another kind.” The idea may be abandoned that a high doctrine of Christ implies long enough lapse of

time for the early tradition to have become so dim that it could suffer a sea-change. The high doctrine is the primitive doctrine. Hebrews is no setting forth of new faith but an appeal to imperfect Churchmen to embrace the ancient faith of the Church in its primitive completeness.

Hence the high doctrine does not in itself carry with it a late date. Yet there is a certain developement. These imperfect Churchmen need a new and special instruction. This Epistle provides it. "Think of our Lord as priest, and I will make you understand," says the author in effect. He will use a new method, a new analogy. And he sets this analogy out in language which would have been new to most of the believers, though it was familiar to him and his friends. Between him and them, educated as they were, it was possible for the old truths to be presented in a more expressive way. And they had yet one further chance of "developement." *Maran atha*, "the Lord cometh," "come, Lord," was the ancient watchword, but already, when S. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, difficulties had arisen about the interpretation of that watchword. Is it possible to read the Epistle to the Hebrews without feeling that in some special manner the author expects an immediate coming, yet a coming which shall be no "end of the world" in the old cruder sense? It is no slight reason for dating the Epistle at the time of the Roman war, that the crisis explains this language. Like the Gospel of S. Luke this Epistle found in those fearful days an interpretation of the "coming." But whereas the Gospel of S. Luke uses certain definite expressions which make it hard to doubt that the evangelist com-

posed his history so many years later than the documents on which he drew, that he could look back on the siege of Jerusalem as a past event,¹ the Epistle has no such phrases. The crisis it deals with still loomed vaguely in the future when the author took up his pen. The developement of doctrine in this Epistle is distinctive, but it implies no late date. It belongs quite naturally to a circle of men who have had a Hellenistic education, who need a fresh introduction to the primitive faith, and who receive it, partly through their familiarity with Alexandrine terminology and the system of analogy, partly through their participation in a political storm which was destined to be an interpretation of a hard dogma in the primitive faith.

¹ Fresh reasons have lately been advanced for dating S. Luke's Gospel earlier. But whatever be the true history of its composition, or revisions, it seems almost impossible that ch. xxi. should have taken its final form before the siege of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER II

THE SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

The readers' imperfect conception of the Person of Christ, which the author proposes to correct by the analogy of priesthood—That analogy is part of the sacramental principle which runs through the Epistle; *i.e.* the revelation of the eternal through the visible—The sacramental and the philosophical mind represented by Hebrews and S. Paul—Sacramental language in Hebrews culminates in the shewing of the death of the Lord as the sacrament of His redemption—The true sacrament involves emotion and will. It is not a translation of reality in terms of intellect, nor does it (like allegory) modify the visible facts from which it starts—The sacramentalist recognizes the limits of the sacramental method, though he commonly expresses even that recognition in picture-language.

THE recipients of this letter were in peril of losing their Christian faith, partly because of pressure from without, partly, however, because the faith they had was so imperfect that it held them by a feeble tie. This appears in such a passage as vi. 1–8, where they are plainly rebuked for their backwardness, and if this passage does imply that they failed to recognize any distinction worth fighting for between Judaism and Christianity, that makes their imperfection the more definite. A confusion of that kind would also explain the still more impressive evidence of the Epistle as a whole. It is throughout planned to persuade men to a fuller creed who have accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, but have not understood nearly all that was contained in that title. A Prophet He might be to

them like one of the prophets (i. 1 f.), and a sinless man—for the author seems to take for granted that they reverence His sinlessness (iv. 15, vii. 26), but not Son of God in the full sense (i. 2 ff.), heir of all life, one with the Christ who manifested himself, however obscurely in ancient days (i. 5 ff., iii. 6, vi. 1, xi. 26), Saviour of all men by His death (ii. 9, v. 9), though dying saved out of death (v. 7), seated now at the right hand of God (i. 13, x. 12, xii. 2), and endued with life indissoluble in which He continually intercedes for men (vii. 25), expected to be seen at last in the manifest power of victorious salvation (ix. 28, xii. 14). This, the rich creed of the Epistle, stands in contrast to the modest axioms from which the argument starts, as truth which must be proved with difficulty in the face of prejudice; “bear with the word of exhortation,” xiii. 22.

Such a creed should not indeed have offended Jews of the first centuries B.C. and A.D. If they accepted any man who had appeared on earth as the Christ that was to be, the apocalyptic religion which surrounded them might have prepared them to expect no less wonderful qualities than these in his Christhood. And it does, in fact, appear that the earliest creed of the Church did arise thus naturally out of apocalyptic Judaism; it did recognize in its Lord such astonishing pre-existence, eternity and power; and the recognition was mingled in the popular mind with just those grosser elements which might be looked for in the circumstances. It was not the supernatural claims of the faith which offended the generality of men.

But other tempers also were characteristic of the

period. Among these was one which Mr. Hart describes in his book *The Hope of Catholick Judaism*; a sober temper, a kind of "religion of sensible men," which continued through Judaism into the Christian Church, and perhaps formed the solid, staying power of each, though by itself it could hardly light the fire of heroism either in theology or in action. Mr. Hart calls this "Catholick Judaism," and finds much of it in Philo. It may be discerned in the Alexandrine Hellenism of the men to whom this letter was written, and as S. Paul towards the nascent Greek spirit in his converts, or S. John towards the ecclesiastical emphasis on the institutional sacraments, so the author sympathizes with this tendency while he checks and directs it. This is the kind of liberal spirit which makes men good citizens, careful of the bodily needs of the poor, anxious to define salvation so generously as to shut none out, and sometimes apt to be satisfied for this purpose with a vague phrase—cf. 1 Tim. ii. 4, for part of the difficulty in the criticism of the Pastoral Epistles is the predominance of this temper side by side with an almost crude apocalyptic phraseology. It tends to "liberalism" instead of difficult freedom; ἐκτενῆς ἐπιείκεια and ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία, "insistent moderation," rather than πῦρ καταναλίσκον "consuming fire"; afraid of the miraculous and unconventional; apt to explain all hope in terms of present life—cf. 2 Tim. ii. 18.¹ Such is this phase of the Hellenistic mind. It is akin to the apostolic; without its leavening the New Testament would not be "apostolic"; yet the full apostolic

¹ Cf. Sainte Beuve's phrase: "Cette moyenne érudition française, saine, sensée, et pas trop curieuse" (*Étude sur Virgile*).

character transcends it, as the mind of the writer to the Hebrews transcends his correspondents'. Such people would be shocked by the heroism of our Lord's life and passion, which was so unconventional that they could only see its apparent commonness. They might easily grow weary of the "gathering together" of their ruder brethren, and the authority of the orthodox "leaders" might irk them, though they would admire the nobility of their courageous faith when a master like their friend pointed it out. They would rest in a low view of the Person of Christ. It would be a reasonable view, and their sympathy would be delicate, and their admiration quick, and from this there would certainly spring a wondering awe, an undefined expectation of something beyond, something not after all understood. It is the temper which is common in these modern days, reverent but tired of all metaphysic in religion; dreaming of universal happiness, and impatient of the limits of defined dogma and of a disciplined society; sentimental, yet, on the other hand, noble and full of yearning, ready for the guidance of a master whose mind is made up and who sees clearly. Such a master must have firm grasp of the traditional faith, must have learnt the traditional discipline which subordinates individual aims and difficulties to the life of the whole body, and must nevertheless be sympathetic enough and learned enough to distinguish between the essential and the accidental, and to interpret the essential itself according to the ideas of a new age. The Epistle is the letter of just such a master. He appeals to the full primitive faith. He distinguishes from it much which has seemed important, and much which has been especially dear to himself and

his friends. He holds firmly to what we may roughly term the supra-natural¹ in the Church's creed, but it is remarkable how silent he is on what we may (again roughly) term the miraculous. He interprets all in terms of the Old Testament, and uses Alexandrine methods in that interpretation, but modifies them freely. And he has a clear view of the relationship of natural and spiritual, visible and eternal. This view descends from Plato, but it is clear, because he has seen it for himself. His idea was afterwards elaborated by S. John, but it is he who offers it as an original contribution to apostolical theology, and it has had lasting effect upon the mind of the Church. It may be described as the sacramental principle, and our business now is to gather from the Epistle as plain an account as we can of his use of that principle.

He says in effect to his friends: "The Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ is a far larger thing than you suppose; think of Him as priest, and I will make you understand what I mean." He shows that this priesthood of the Lord is the consummation of a priesthood which runs through all visible life, and because it is a function of real life has its final effect in the eternal sphere. He bids them contemplate this, and thus he appeals to their intellect; he bids them share this priesthood by doing that hard duty which was before them, and thus he clinches his argument by appealing to their will.

He presses upon them, in fact, all through his letter

¹ Perhaps no better explanation of this word can be suggested than Dr. Burkitt's epigram: "It is not as a philosopher, but as Prometheus, that we worship Christ,—the Man who came down from heaven to give men the Divine fire" (*Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 198).

the necessity of the sacramental process, of reaching the eternal—eternal truth in thinking, eternal peace in acting—through the frank acceptance of the actual conditions of this life. He begins indeed by offering a mere analogy, by borrowing terms from priestly service as commonly seen, spoken of, understood. But he does not rest long in the mere comparison, and as often as he returns to it he shews that he is but employing a convenient language for the exposition of a far wider and more real life than that language is generally applied to.

Analogy was like enough to the Philonic method to be welcome to Alexandrines. But analogy thus intensified is in reality very different from Philonism. Philo made fanciful allegories in which reality was first subtracted, and then history thus modified became a starting-point for alien speculation. Here the method is to take human history and relationships, to see them steadily as they actually are in their visible environment, and to use them first as simple illustrations of greater things, and then as having so real a connexion with those greater things as to be effective means for comprehending them, and that in action rather than in bare thought.

Philo deals with allegories, the Epistle with symbols. Dr. Du Bose indicates the difference in *The Reason of Life*, pp. 161-4, where he distinguishes between Jesus Christ as truly historical and truly a symbol, from Jesus Christ divorced from history, and made "the mere symbol of our own ideal of truth, beauty, and goodness, or God, incarnate in us. . . . By mere symbol I mean just that which is actually meant by those who contend for it: a

sign that is not the thing, that represents only, and is not what it represents." The writer to the Hebrews calls the true symbol εἰκὼν, "very image," the mere symbol σκιά, "shadow," and he held that "shadows" pass away. To the same effect Dr. Inge quotes Goethe: "That is true symbolism when the more particular represents the more general, not as a dream or shade, but as a vivid, instantaneous revelation of the inscrutable." Somewhat in the same sense M. Bergson uses "signe," and, borrowing a mode of expression from him, we might describe sacraments as being always part of the movement of life. And E. Caird, in *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, i. p. 162, wrote of Plato in words which might be applied to this Epistle. "The next step is taken by means of an analogy, which is really more than an analogy, since the object used as an image is declared to be the 'offspring' or product of that which it is taken to illustrate. In other words, the material world from which the image is drawn is not for Plato an arbitrary symbol of the ideal reality; it is its manifestation or phenomenal expression; and, therefore, the principle of unity in the one is essentially akin to the principle of unity in the other."

On this principle, then, the author works in his Epistle. He "suggests the secrets by stating the evident facts." And first he states them as simple illustrations; they form a language of picture. Such language seems poetic to some, old-fashioned to others. It has always been the early generations in the world's recurring ages who have spoken vigorously, picturesquely, audaciously of divine truths. Thus it was in the early prophetic period in Israel. This becomes inadequate or

gives offence. Thus in the Deuteronomic period the old freedom in talking of God was checked. He was no longer to be described as visibly moving among men, as smelling the sacrifices. And yet picture language can never be quite dispensed with. He still speaks out of the fire, though no form is seen, and though to the ten commandments He added no more, still "underneath are the everlasting arms." The final stage is hardly to be illustrated from the Old Testament itself, but sometimes from our inferences from it; when, to adopt Plato's words, "we think that which is like something is not like, but is the thing to which it is like." A development of this kind has taken place in our own day. Not long ago people were content to think of the day of the Lord as an assize, of the material fire of hell if not of the material joys of heaven. The resurrection of our Lord was described as though the sacred body could have been seen leaving the sepulchre. The miracles of the Gospel and the promises of the creed were vividly pictured in the colours of everyday life. But to some this picturing had already begun to be inadequate. Others were forgetting that it was picturing, and were first insisting for themselves and then for others on the literal sufficiency of the terms. The consequence is that in these last days of ours some thoughtful but perhaps "provincial" minds are condescending to blank denial. Others would reject the whole language of picture, and would reinterpret all in terms of more or less pure thought; nor are they altogether unwilling to substitute new tyranny for old, and impose their intellectual system on all the brethren.

The Epistle to the Hebrews forbids that imposition.

In it the language of picture is applied freely; it is a character impressed upon the whole letter, one of the characters which distinguish it from the writings of S. Paul. Indeed S. Paul and its author represent in this respect a broad distinction in the minds of men at large, a distinction which might be suggested by the labels "philosopher" and "sacramentalist." Some men are philosophical, and deal with everything as far as possible in terms of pure thought. A symbol or sacrament—the words bore once the same significance¹—appeals little to them and is seldom used by them, except as a mere illustration by means of which they may adapt their reasoning to the vulgar. So S. Paul with his wild olive, and so (thought Henry Sidgwick²)

¹ Cf. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 253, ed. 1. "The two great sacraments are typical symbols, if we use the word in the sense which I give to it, as something which, in being what it is, is a sign and vehicle of something higher and better. This is what the early Church meant when it called the sacraments symbols. A 'symbol' at that period implied a mystery, and a 'mystery' implied a revelation. . . . So Justin Martyr uses *συμβολικῶς εἰπεῖν* and *εἰπεῖν ἐν μυστηρίῳ* as interchangeable terms; and Tertullian says that the name of Joshua was *nominis futuri sacramentum*."

² See his Journal in *Henry Sidgwick, a Memoir*, p. 407. Moberly, in *Atonement and Personality*, p. 178f (ed. 1), has a fine passage in which he shows that the abstract line of thought, rightly directed, does work out in the end to a firmer grasp on personal relationship. He says that it is well sometimes in our thought of, or communion with God, to substitute the abstract for the personal phrase. "We may do it with such scientific abstractions as Force or Law. Much more do we help ourselves by doing it with the religious abstractions, Omnipotence, Wisdom, Righteousness, Perfectness, Love. . . . It is through accustoming ourselves to them, and to thought in terms of them, that the mind would gradually realize that every one of these—Law, Power, Cause, ultimate Being, Reason, Wisdom, Holiness, Love. . . of necessity is in its ultimate climax of meaning Personal: and, moreover, that as they are all severally Personal, so are they ultimately all the same one, identical, Personal: and that this is what we mean by the Personal God; not a limited alternative to unlimited abstracts: but the transcendent and inclusive completeness of them all."

Plato in his myths. In theology the limit of purely philosophical thought is soon reached. Faith leaps the boundary, and these thinkers become mystics who know a thing they cannot express. Yet in their effort to express it they break out into strangely illuminative language—language more like a fire than a picture; such is S. Paul's, "I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me."¹ Contrast that with the picture in this Epistle; "Run the race, looking unto Jesus, who hath sat down at the right hand of God." This language comes home to the mass of men who are rather sacramentalists than philosophers. They do not break away from things touched and seen, and in their deepest meditations they

¹ S. Paul's language has its parallels in the phraseology of contemporary paganism. But this was to S. Paul merely what the technical terms of Philonism were to our author. For each an alphabet was provided in which they could write their own thoughts. So, according to Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, the old Semitic mythology gave an "alphabet" to the authors of the Old Testament. The recognition of this language in S. Paul does not, of course, imply that the "mystery-religion" formed his theology. His mystical spirit was far removed from those mysteries. So far as a tendency in that direction was working in his time, he was more concerned to check its aberrations than to help it; see Kirsopp Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of S. Paul*, pp. 40-47, and Schweitzer (*Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung*, vii. p. 177).

The philosophical, mystical character of S. Paul is not inconsistent with the apocalyptic base which Schweitzer finds in him. The mystical and the apocalyptic are in closest kin. This may perhaps explain not only a good deal in S. Paul's Epistles, but something too of that universality in our Lord's teaching which sometimes appears to complicate the apocalyptic view of the Gospel. But indeed all such analyses of the synoptic spirit are partial. The remarkable thing in it is the balance of such opposing qualities. Cf. Von Hügel, *The Mystical Element in Religion*, ii. pp. 116-120, "it is the pre-Pauline parts which give us the most immediately and literally faithful, and especially the most complete and many-sided, picture of Our Lord's precise words and actions . . . it is the synoptic, the pre-Pauline tradition which contains the fuller arsenal of the spiritual forces which have transfigured and which still inspire the world of souls."

still think in pictures. It is not an inferior mode of thinking, but it is a different mode. In these ranks artists and poets as well as plain men are found. Both kinds of mind may lag within the limits of material things, for there is no royal road for avoiding the chasm between the reasonable and the eternal. Yet the chasm may be transcended, and what the philosopher turned mystic finds at last in the silent ground of the heart the picture-thinker touches by a vision which is always akin to the effect of poetry; sacramentalism is never very different from art. S. Paul in the phrase quoted comes nearer to the reality of which he is thinking than our author in his picture, but it is difficult to say how. "Coming nearer" is itself picture-language, and alien to S. Paul's process. The image in Hebrews does not "come near" at all, but it links daily life with larger life. S. Paul fuses two lives in one; Hebrews suggests two aspects of what is all the time one life. Hebrews affords a point of contact through which the more ordinary mind grasps the eternal. "The more ordinary," for observation shows that it is so; ten read the *De Imitatione* for one who reads S. Augustine's *Confessions*. Yet not necessarily the simpler or less instructed; on the contrary, S. Paul is often better understood by rustic minds than by scholars, and a rather elaborately educated mind is needed to appreciate as a whole the Alexandrine, sacramental Epistle to the Hebrews.

For there can be no doubt to which class its author belongs. He is no philosopher though he borrows the terms of the schools. He is an artist and a poet. From beginning to end of the Epistle we move among visions which recall things, places, events, to the mind. Phrases

or even single words are so manipulated that they affect us as through the sense of remembered vision; and the minor charm of the book comes from the skill, like that of a painter's touch, with which this is done.

The introduction (i. 1-4) is a poet's vision. It sets the reader by the throne of God in heaven, and shews him the light proceeding from the invisible glory, the image on the seal expressing the hidden essence of the Godhead, going forth, striking and impressing eminences in Israel's history with its form; then taking definite shape in man on earth and revealing the Person whose mind and will have so far been dimly figured; then making purification for sins, and returning, full circle rounded, to His heavenly home, but enriched now with manhood and priesthood. It is a poet's guess, already real to the author, for the vision has been given him and contains for him "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"—pure artists' language that; but a guess that shall be tested in the rest of the Epistle by argument, emotion, experience. The rest of the Epistle is full of like art. This does not refer to general skill in rhetoric, but only to the picture-language which is continually used; the triumphant return of the first-born Son from obscurity into the society of nations with the chorus of worshipping angels to usher him (i. 6); the continual stream of ministering spirits as they go and come in the movement of the eternal liturgy (i. 14); the vivid spectacle of Jesus standing crowned in readiness for the suffering of death (ii. 9); the devil as the potentate of the realm of death (ii. 14); the sabbath festival of the people of

God (iv. 9); and the myriads of angels in festal assembly. How concrete and impressive to the senses is the whole of that description of the heavenly Jerusalem (xii. 22-24), nor less so the picture in the same chapter of Sinai and the giving of the Law.

There is again the picture of the Word of God as a two-edged knife, and the grim suggestion of a battle field, or surgeon's table, or the butcher work of sacrifice, the more arresting for the vagueness which makes it difficult to fix the precise image intended (iv. 12 f.). And the approach to the "throne of grace" (iv. 16) to which there are so many parallels in the rest of the Epistle (cf. especially ix. 24, x. 19 ff.). This verse is quoted with admirable fitness at the end of the Invitatory to Confession in the English Prayer Book; it expresses the liturgical spirit of the whole Epistle, for if S. Paul insists on the idea that the faithful always are in heaven, the thought of this author is that they go there when they pray. The figure of our Lord as Highpriest is pictured in many impressive fashions; as hailed Highpriest by God at the moment of completed salvation (v. 10), as entering within the veil (vi. 20, cf. x. 20), and very impressively, as destined to come forth again "a second time" from the eternal sanctuary, to be seen not by all but by those who are still expecting His salvation (ix. 28, cf. xii. 14), as the people waited for the tarrying Zacharias (S. Lk. i. 21). The author seems to take pleasure in renewing the old Israelitish simplicity in speaking of God and His operations; hence the elaborate emphasis upon His mediation by His oath (vi. 17); the vigour of the exhortation to reverence in holy things, to *λατρεία*, "divine service," rather than *διδαχαὶ ποικίλαι*

καὶ ξέναι, "new theologies," "for our God is consuming fire" (xii. 29); and the gentle correction of Philonic abstractions when (xi. 16) he says of the patriarchs that God was not ashamed of their simplicity but allowed them to call Him "their own God" as by a surname. In the same way the phrase "living God" (iii. 12, ix. 14, x. 31, xii. 22) may be explained. It is far more likely to be chosen as a familiar precious title to Jewish ears than as a novelty for the instruction of Gentiles. But besides that, this attribute of life is characteristic of the whole Epistle; it belongs to the vividness of the author's conception of things as well as persons. He seems to strike out picturesque sketches almost involuntarily, as when he writes of the officers of the Church, and bids his friends recontemplate continually the exit from affairs of those who are at rest (xiii. 7), or the wakeful nights of those still on watch (xiii. 17). Single words or phrases are expressive in the same way, as τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, "on the Godward side" (ii. 17, v. 1), μὴ συκεκερασμένους τῇ πίστει, of men "not mingled with or kneaded into the faith" (iv. 2, cf. ii. 11, ἐξ ἑνός, which may perhaps mean "of one lump"), ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου, "indissoluble life" (vii. 16), τὸ παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον, of all the wearing out and ageing material of the world (viii. 13, cf. i. 11 f., and xii. 27). Even his quotations from the Old Testament seem to be selected (no doubt unconsciously) in accordance with this taste for the visible and picturesque: "Behold, I and the children whom God gave me" (ii. 13). "Yet a little while and he that cometh shall come and shall not linger" (x. 37), "like the stars of heaven and as the sand on the sea-shore, numberless" (xi. 12). Just after this comes the

“strangers and pilgrims” of xi. 13, which is expanded in a remarkable picture; these pilgrims saw the promises from afar and greeted them, as pilgrims in the desert see the minarets of the distant city at the end of some day’s march; they greet them, but pitch their tents for the night, still forced to put off the entry they are seeking. Of course most of these are merely examples of a habit of language. They might roughly be explained by saying that the author employs a metaphorical style. But style reveals a writer’s mind, and though these phrases may not be severally raised to the rank of sacramental things, they do in their mass illustrate the sacramental tendency of his thought. Visible things mean so much to him; he has, as Baron von Hügel says of Leibniz, “his admirably continuous sense of the *inside* of everything that fully exists.”

And his pleasure in such things is natural and spontaneous. Similes, by which rhetorical writers consciously explain what they have to say, are rare in this Epistle. Even in such a similitude as that of the good and bad soil (vi. 7 f.) there is no formula of introduction. The comparison at the end of this chapter is rather different. It belongs to a series of three pictures with which the argument of the Epistle is punctuated, and which may be described as sacramental in a more special sense. In this (vi. 18–20), the first of the three, the Christian hope is figured as an anchor, and the figure grows into a picture of the readers of the Epistle on board a ship which has finished her voyage; the anchor has been dropped, and passing out of sight into the mysterious deep, it already holds the land. Jesus, as the captain of the ship, has gone ashore; the crew wait His summons

to bring the ship into harbour and follow Him.¹ The second is at the beginning of ch. xii. Here the roll of "martyrs" in ch. xi., who have had witness borne to them, or (as we might say) have displayed their courageous faith, leads on to a picture of a racecourse or arena, where the readers of the Epistle have to display their faith before witnesses. They are about to run their course. It is a course that Jesus has himself run before them, and at the end of it He is now seated in glory. In the former picture He was out of sight; in this He is in sight. In the former they simply waited; now they are bidden to keep their eyes fixed on Him, and so to run with patience.

These two passages might be read and hastily dismissed as merely elaborated figures. But they are marked by a peculiar intensity. They show the Christian faith, life, strength, as it specially affects these readers in their present circumstances. In ch. vi. they have "fled for refuge to take hold of the hope set before" them in those stormy days. In ch. xii. the definite article concentrates attention on the particular sin which was their immediate peril, and though the precise meaning of the epithet translated in the English versions, "which doth so easily beset us," is disputed, it may be reasonably

¹ A fine adaptation of this is the sailor's epitaph :

"Blow, Boreas, blow; let Neptune's billows roar;
Here lies a sailor safe landed on the shore;
Though Neptune's waves have toss'd him to and fro,
By God's decree he harbours here below.
He now at anchor rides amidst the fleet
Waiting orders Admiral Christ to meet."

This is in S. Andrew's churchyard, Hertford. Another version at Lelant, Cornwall, has less of the communion of saints, but gains significance by its position on the sea coast,

held to point to that moment of nervous discomfort when the timid athlete strips off his coat—unwilling—to be ready for the signal. Pharisaic Jews did not attend races. Hellenists may not have been so scrupulous. If they had not seen an arena, the readers had probably been on board ship. But this need not be pressed. The concordance suggests that the vividness of the appeal is as much due to literary reminiscence as to outdoor experience. It is the character of this Epistle to look at things through books; that is perhaps one reason why it has been so often criticised as a sermon—it seems detached from life. But that is merely seeming. The one direct aim that runs all through it is to prepare a set of bookish men for possible martyrdom. To such readers the letter was no common sermon, and if its sacramental images were somewhat bookishly expressed, that would not detract for such men from the vivid reality of their visible side.

That reality in the visible symbol is one necessary part of a sacramental figure. But of course that would be nothing if the inward reality were trifling. In these instances both realities are intense, but their intensity is not fully perceived till they are recognized as leading up to the last of the series, the picture in ch. xiii. There is a continually deepening intensity. In each picture the readers and their Lord are introduced. In the first they are passive, and He is out of sight. In the second they prepare for a contest, and He sits in view. Now in the third the union between Him and them is to be accomplished. And here the picture has but a superficial picturesqueness, but a quite unambiguous reality; the symbol trembles into unison with the eternal truth of

which it is the symbol; a plain sacrament is presented. Our Lord upon the Cross is shewn as a sacrifice, or rather as the off-scouring of a sacrifice, which is burned without the camp. There is the realism with which the Crucifixion and all the humiliation of the Lord's life is imagined in this Epistle. To see the fact simply as it took place, that is the first process in the sacramental interpretation of events. Then the context with its sacrificial references, already prepared for by the earlier sacrificial teaching of the Epistle, carries the mind from the outward to the inward, from the Cross to the eternal sanctuary. At the moment of the Lord's dying on Calvary He entered the Father's presence. What men could see was the execution of a criminal, with all the horror of such an execution. What the faithful believe to have been the inward reality thus symbolized was the entry of the eternal Highpriest, with the blood of His perfected life, to make atonement for His people.

Nor is that all. Even that might be criticized as mere fanciful analogy if it stood by itself, but the author in this passage also bids his readers to go forth to the Lord outside the camp bearing His shame. They are to do what He did, to be as He was, and so to join Him. This is their partaking of the sacrifice. There is a certain verbal correspondence here between the act of salvation and the Jewish ceremonies. "Of sin-offerings the priests do not partake, nor do they of our sacrifice, but there is a partaking which is ours, *i.e.* this joining of the Lord outside the camp in a deed of renunciation." But the correspondence is merely verbal, and the author has taken no pains to make it neat and clear. There is no use of Jewish sacrifices here as types of Christ's

sacrifice — the Jewish sacrifices were not types, only shadows; there was nothing sacramental about them. What is presented is the death of Christ on Calvary as a sacrament of His eternal act of salvation, and the devotion of His followers as part of the same sacramental action, the outward sign and means of their union with Him. And this extension of the analogy, this interweaving of present, and therefore possibly repeated interest in the primary action, is part of the essence of the sacrament, which is just what the two former illustrative pictures have prepared the readers to comprehend.

The late Dean of Lincoln, Dr. Wickham, in the Introduction to his edition, remarks on the artistic plan of this Epistle: "It is, in a sense, beyond any other Epistles in the New Testament, an artistic whole. It is a letter, but at the same time it is an impassioned treatise or piece of oratory, having a single purpose, ardently felt, clearly conceived, never lost to sight. The whole argument is in view from the beginning, whether in the purely argumentative passages, or in those which are in form hortatory; we are constantly meeting phrases which are to be taken up again, and to have their full meaning given to them later on. The plan itself develops. While the figures to some extent change and take fresh colour, there is growing through all, in trait on trait, the picture which the writer designs to leave before his readers' minds."

This applies to the point before us. The sacramental idea is an important part of the author's plan. His language throughout is, half-unconsciously, sacramental, and he passes imperceptibly from a large general

feeling of the significance of visible things to a particular suggestion of the meaning of certain selected events and actions. These are arranged in a series where they take hold of one another and deepen one another's seriousness, concentrating attention more and more on a special need, duty, and hope, of the readers' own lives, and binding this hope closer and closer with the triumph of their Lord. Then finally, the Cross is shewn to be in a pre-eminent sense sacramental, revealing through its visible heroism the secret of the Saviour's Person and work, and affording to His servants a means of partaking in His effort and His strength.

When we turn back from ch. xiii., and read the whole Epistle with this thought in our minds, we perceive that this sacrament of the Cross is itself but part of a larger sacrament, the Incarnation. The author's chief contribution to theology proper is in fact this; he gives a first sketch of that sacramental interpretation of the Incarnation which S. John has elaborated in a whole Gospel.¹ That interpretation shall presently be considered. At this point let us linger for a while on the general idea of sacrament; only so far anticipating as to start from the thought of the Incarnation as the one primary sacrament. It would indeed be proper to say that, strictly speaking, it is the only sacrament, and that a second is inconceivable. As dependent on it, however,

¹ This treatise does not include a study of the Johannine writings, and it is for the sake of brevity and custom that I speak here and elsewhere of S. John as author of the Fourth Gospel. The tradition of the Church, as I understand it, makes him "author," not writer, and it seems to me not improbable that such a tradition may become more and more acceptable as it is more thoroughly examined. But I subscribe heartily to Mr. Streeter's words: "Only those who have merely trifled with the problems [that Gospel] suggests are likely to speak dogmatically upon the subject" (*Foundations*, p. 82).

as part of it, all visible things, so far as they are real, are sacraments. In the English Catechism two sacraments are distinguished as being alone "ordained by Christ himself." Here the word "ordained" warns us that "sacrament" is used in a special sense of institutional, ceremonial, ecclesiastical sacraments. There may be more than two of them, but there are only two which were ordained by Christ himself. When S. Jerome wrote "Apocalypsis Johannis tot habet sacramenta quot verba" he used the word in another sense, much as we have been using it of the general language of this Epistle. But he is at the same time passing from the thought of such literary sacraments to the greater thought of the sacraments of nature, sacraments which were not ordained by the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh, but have been created by the Christ the Son of God. In all these sacraments one and the same kinship appears with the one sacrament of the Incarnation which is the perfection and the origin of all; the same revelation through what is visible of the eternal and invisible; and the same expansion into the whole breadth and depth of men's lives, where by means of the sacrament union with God through Christ is effected.

A sacrament is a point in space and time through which as it were¹—there must always be an "as it were" in dealing with sacraments—man's will, mind, affection, come into touch with eternal truth and power. And in every effectual sacrament there is a margin round the momentary point, in which margin preparation and

¹ Coleridge's definition of the principle of Gothic architecture might be applied to the sacramental principle in general—"Infinity made imaginable." But this is too purely intellectual. There is nothing truly sacramental without connexion with the will (*Table Talk*, June 29, 1833).

application go on. Thus in Baptism the sacramental moment is the visible washing with water and rehearsal of the solemn words of ritual, but in the sacramental margin come the instruction of the catechumen, or the after-instruction of the infant; the prayers, resolves, affections of parents and god-parents; the gradual discipline of life in which the given grace is tested and applied. Emotion, intelligence, the bracing of the will, all this counts in the sacramental effect, as S. Paul very clearly demonstrates in the passage on Baptism in Rom. vi., and in his rebuke of the Corinthians for their levity in using Holy Communion (1 Cor. xi. 17 ff.).¹ The ritual moment is itself solemn, but its solemnity depends in part on the preparation which has been made for it, and in the application on which the partaker is resolved, and which is known, in the common experience of the Church, to be made after it. The margin is not separated from the point; the sacramental is all one with the daily life of the believer. The two are "of one" (Heb. ii. 11)—"of one piece," but also "of one source," for a sacrament would be a fantasy if the eternal and spiritual were not the reality which gave it value.

And yet to a thorough sacramentalist this statement would not be quite satisfactory. It suggests a division between the natural and the spiritual which he would be

¹ Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung*, vii., argues that S. Paul connected his doctrine of redemption practically, not logically, with the sacraments. That, if correct, would not be inconsistent with the inference here drawn from the Epistles. He adds that the fourth evangelist, like Ignatius, knows no other salvation than that which is bound up with the sacraments. Would it not be more accurate to say that the Fourth Gospel guards the moral significance of sacraments at a period, or in a community, in which there was a tendency to a mechanical use of them?

loth to admit. To distinguish is not to separate,¹ and the sacramentalist thoroughly approves the saying, "what is spiritual is natural, and what is most natural is most spiritual." The very essence of his creed is to accept the natural side of things frankly without disguise or toning down. Christ is for him very God and very man, not an angel. That is what Dr. Hort insisted upon so much in all thinking. Thus in *The Way, the Truth, and the Life* (p. 163), he wrote: "The only peace which can close this discord is the peace of the Son of God, His redemption of the world which came into being through Him, and of which He is the Life the Truth and the Way. All our primary knowledge of God is through Him, the true Son of the true Father. All our primary knowledge of Him, the Son, is through His revelation in human flesh and blood under the conditions of earthly life, and through the testimony of those who had conversed with Him by their bodily senses. All our thoughts of heavenly things are therefore shaped out of earthly images. All service rendered to God is the service of His Son's kingdom, and it is rendered in and through and to the work which He is ever carrying on in the world. All elements of our being within, all objects and forces over which we can put forth any influence without, are made for His service, and attain their own special perfection only when they are turned towards Him. For while all things in their Divine order lead up to Him, each separate thing in its own form,

¹ Cf. Coleridge. "It is a dull and obtuse mind that must divide in order to distinguish; but it is a still worse that distinguishes in order to divide. In the former we may contemplate the source of superstition and idolatry; in the latter of schism, heresy, and a seditious and sectarian spirit" (*Aids to Reflection*, Introd. Aphorisms, xxvi.).

function and life is contemplated by Him, and His delight and glory is in all.”

The last sentence of this quotation is noticeable. It points to the distinction between the sacramental and the merely analogical. A sacrament is a process of life, not a stimulus to thought. There is, as we shall see presently, a priesthood in created life which is a sacrament of the divine work of salvation, but that is very different from the effect which a particular priesthood like the Levitical has upon our thoughts concerning the scheme of salvation. True prophecy is sacramental, but a system of “types” in which intellectual notions are gathered from particular sayings or events is not. Hort expresses this distinction in a criticism of Ruskin which he wrote in a letter to J. Ellerton: “As far as I can see, his great fault is his endeavouring to interpret symbols into intellectual notions. Now this, though at first sight it may seem almost completely opposed to the vulgar notion of beauty, as something having no real absolute existence except as that which is *pleasing* to the eye, is really an offshoot, springing lower and deeper down from the same root; for it tacitly assumes that whatever is spiritual, has a substantive existence, and is communicable from spirit to spirit, must be capable of interpretation into intellectual ideas, and therefore into language which is their exponent; whereas it seems to me most important to assert that beauty is not merely a phase or (as Sterling calls it) the *body* of truth, but has its own distinct essence and is communicable through its own *media*, independently of those of truth. And hence that forms of beauty are valuable (to use a word which most imperfectly conveys my meaning), not as sensuous ex-

ponents of those forms of truth which are emanations from Him who is the Perfect Truth, but as themselves emanations from Him who is the Perfect Beauty.”¹ This is put roughly, as in a quickly written letter, but the meaning is clear. Visible things are not merely to be used as illustrations of thought which they are arbitrarily chosen to excite, but are themselves *media* of their own eternal reality. The difficulty of the conception lies in its expression. To get over that difficulty Platonists use the word “idea” for the reality, the Church uses the word “sacrament” (or “symbol,” or “mystery,” or sometimes “sign”) for the medium. The practical application of the conception is conditioned by the honesty with which the natural sign is employed within its proper limits; these limits make it a fit means for what it has to do. When these limits are transgressed, and the sign is used in an unnatural way, the result is allegory instead of sacrament. Such is the Docetic theory of our Lord’s suffering, the theory of verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the “language of flowers” (*e.g.* “pansies for thoughts”), and our author would add, the continuance of the Levitical priesthood as a type into which the Christian priesthood should be moulded.

An illustration from painting may not be out of place. The Florentine school in their intellectual vigour lean towards allegory in their treatment of the mysteries of the faith, and, like S. Paul, sometimes employ it nobly.

¹ *Life and Letters*, i. p. 109. Cf. Inge, *Faith* (Jowett Lectures for 1909, p. 204). “The view taken in these lectures is that beauty is one of the fundamental attributes of God, which He has therefore impressed upon His world. I hold it to be a quality residing in the objects and not imparted to them by the observer. I hold beauty to be, like truth and goodness, an end in itself for God’s creation.”

The Venetians in their religious pictures are at their best when they frankly represent scenes and persons as they might be seen on earth. If, in some instances, this appears to lessen the sacredness of their work, the sympathy of second thoughts will often change that judgement. There can be no doubt that in Tintoretto's historical realism the sacramental principle is magnificently vindicated. How near in spirit to his Crucifixions are the Passion chapters of this Epistle.

Tintoretto has indeed a remarkable affinity to this Epistle as a whole. He seems to have met, mastered, and transformed difficulties the same in kind as those which affected its readers. There appears in his pictures the same leaning to the visible world, the same uneasiness in accepting the faith in its old simplicity, the same wonder at the paradox of the humility of the days of the Saviour's flesh, and the same sense of God-head through all this, however hard to reach. It has been said that the power of his pictures springs from the painter's "visions"; where no "vision" was granted the picture was inferior. This reminds us of the vivid imaginations of our author. But only those receive visions who have prepared for them, and it is evident that Tintoretto had taken pains to realize with historical imagination the persons and circumstances of the Gospel days, and this emphasized the difficulties of faith. Our Lord and His Apostles were to him peasants; the Crucifixion was a criminal execution, with the sordid accessories of such an execution; miracles could hardly be accepted at their face value; Satan was not the Satan of ordinary tradition, he stood for what seemed beautiful, and the Gospel life was opposed to it. Tin-

toretto took these actualities, and frankly accepting them, treated them sacramentally. The things that seemed mean received in truthful but reverent representation more abundant honour. The dying Man upon the Cross beneath which the group of peasants were gathered became more than ever the centre of the scene where the pomp of the prosaic world was set in array against Him. Miraculous agents passed into elemental forces, and became more powerful as they lost their obvious romance. Death was fairly faced as a violent fact; the arrow goes deep into S. Sebastian and the bodily powers collapse, but that declares death to be no end but a mysterious act of indissoluble life far more forcibly than do the conventional representations in which the arrows seem to effect no real harm.

One last point must be noticed. We saw how the picture in ch. xiii., while on the one hand it is more thoroughly sacramental than those that led up to it, is on the other hand less completely picturesque. The symbol, we said, trembles here into unison with that of which it is the symbol. In other words, the author checks the flow of imagery, and seems to confess that this method has its limitations. There is a completion it can only point to and never perfectly disclose. That confession is necessary in every kind of theological expression. The true sacramentalist has the advantage of most people in being more sharply aware of it. There is a hymn of Alford's in which, after six verses of varied sacramental imagery, he goes on—

“Nought that city needeth
Of these aisles of stone;
Where the Godhead dwelleth
Temple there is none.

All the saints that ever
In these courts have stood,
Are but babes and feeding
On the children's food.
On through sign and token,
Stars amid the night,
Forward through the darkness,
Forward into light."

This illustrates the sacramentalist's consciousness that though definition is necessary for all expression, still definition itself is a makeshift of time and space. But it also illustrates his inveterate habit of concrete expression. Even that confession he has to make in concrete imagery. So in this Epistle the author does indeed shew by a word here or by reticence there how conscious he is of the limits of symbolical reach. But for the most part he cheerfully works within those limits, and is content to picture the inward reality as well as the visible event. Thus the Crucifixion is for him a sacrament. But its invisible reality is still described in picture as the entrance of the Highpriest, the Son of God, into the sanctuary of the divine presence. It was no doubt of this writer that Dr. Swete was chiefly thinking when he said in *The Ascended Christ* (p. xiv.), "However much we may endeavour to 'dematerialize' symbols, and get to the naked facts which lie behind them, as, for instance, by substituting modern philosophical terms for the biblical words, we do little more than substitute one set of symbols for another; the ultimate truths remain impenetrable while we are here."

CHAPTER III

THE SACRAMENT OF THE INCARNATION: THE LIMITATIONS OF MANHOOD

The sacramentalist starts from faith in God, and sees the sacramental quality of creation perfected in the Incarnation—The author of this Epistle received from the Church the doctrine of our Lord's Godhead, and interpreted it sacramentally, recognizing the limitations of His manhood—To vindicate that manhood has been the task of criticism, which in its "apocalyptic" developement insists that the Gospels must be read more simply, and our Lord accepted as they portray Him, conscious of Christhood as the circumstances of those days moulded that idea—The Epistle agrees with this view, which however is but part of a general movement in modern thought, and needs exacter elaboration—Already however it assures us of the traditional doctrine of the Atonement; of our Lord's abiding life and sovereignty; of the ideal character of Christian morality—And it reacts upon the criticism of documents—Nor does it go beyond the statement in the Epistle: "Though He was Son yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."

WE use the word sacrament, then, in a wide sense. Whenever visible things reach out into the eternal and carry us with them into God, there is a sacrament. The visible side must be real. Death may be a sacrament, but its sacramental truth is impaired when we refuse to see the pain, the horror, the breaking off of bodily functions, including, for instance, thought as a physical act of the brain. Real death, not idyllic death, is the act of larger life, and the sacrament of our faith in that life. Again, the outreach, the connexion must be real. To say "pansies for thoughts," or "the lilies and languors

of virtue, the raptures and roses of vice," are fancies, but the growth, bloom, and seeding of a flower is part of the universal life of earth, and is a sacrament of the life indeed. And once more, the visible thing must be fit. If roses really made for vice they would still be far from sacramental, for sacraments have to do with reality which is God not vice, and they must themselves be good. An imperfect human life may be highly sacramental because its struggle for the good may be intense, but it is only sacramental in so far as it does partake of holiness.

And so we are led to the one sacrament of which the various sacraments of the manifold universe are but parts, *i.e.* to the sacrament of the incarnation of the Word of God.

The sacramentalist starts from God. Unless there be a meaning in the universe, and a good one; unless there be a goal for the movement of life, and a holy one, there could be no sacrament. Whether such a meaning and goal can be demonstrated he leaves to the philosopher. It may be that demonstration can never get beyond *πάντα ῥέει*, but the sacramentalist starts from God, from whom, through whom, and unto whom are all things. All that is technical in the art and abstruse in the science of philosophy he passes over. This is speaking abstractedly as though of a pure sacramentalist, with no touch of the philosopher or mystic in him, a monster of course, apart from all reality, the very thing a sacramentalist would be the first to confess could have no personal existence. But such abstraction is often held to be convenient, and in any case the important point is that the sacramentalist seeks and finds God mainly in the manifestation of His Word. That is the

convenient Alexandrine term which led the way to the still more satisfying formula of the Holy Trinity as the explanation of the universe in God, of God beyond the universe, and of all the aspiration of the creature. It had been already expressed without technical terms by St. Paul: "Of him and through him and unto him are all things." It means that God is not oneness blank and apart, but all created things are present with Him in His Word, through whom they come forth from Him; and again, that created things have not blank, aimless existence, but pass forth from Him into life which is movement, production, and growth through struggle, a noble process of return unto Him through the life-giving Spirit. The Word and the Spirit are indeed more than the creature and the creature's life. They are, from the point of view of logical measurement, infinitely more. But the Trinitarian interpretation of Scripture converts us from the measurement implied by "infinity" to the goodness implied by "eternal," and shews the chasm abolished. Because Word and Spirit are God, therefore creation is raised to the uttermost, and at last (the Christian hope) God shall be "all in all." When the Word was known as Jesus of Nazareth, and the Spirit as inspiring His manhood, theoretical language passed into sacramental action, and love, the motive of God, could become, without limit to its reach, the motive of men.

Such a universe being the living expression of such a God has necessarily been full of sacraments from the beginning; yet all that multiplicity of sacrament was but the many-sided flashing of the one sacrament of God manifesting Himself through the Word. This, or something like this, was what our author had in mind

when he quoted from Ps. xlv. in the prologue to his Epistle:—

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the works of thy hands:
They shall perish; but thou continest:
And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;
And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up,
As a garment, and they shall be changed:
But thou art the same,
And thy years shall not fail.”

The earth, sea, sky, and all that is in them reveal God. S. Paul knew this; our Lord's parables shew that He delighted in it; the author of Hebrews says just enough to make us feel that he did too. But he was in close enough touch with educated science to understand how little man knows of his surroundings. He feels the majesty of nature; “What is man?” he quotes. He knows how spiritual are its forces; “fire and wind are angels,” he quotes again. But he severely confines his argument to men, the only beings under God whom he really knows as persons. “For verily,” he says, “not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham.” A sacrament is a presentment of life in a manner intelligible to men, and the Incarnation is therefore the supreme sacrament. It does not however follow that it is the supreme instance of the divine activity, or that man is the highest form of life in the created universe. And leaving such vast speculations, we must recognize that the sacrament of the Incarnation itself will not be fully valued if man be separated in our thought from the rest of nature. Much of our modern difficulty about the Person of Christ is due to our enlarged knowledge of nature and deepened reverence for

God's revelation therein. This difficulty may bring its own remedy. We seem to require a new attention to the Alexandrine doctrine of the Word.¹ The theologian of these days tends to lay exclusive stress on "Thou hast put all things under his feet." The man of science and the country labourer think "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" So in the synoptic Gospels (as in the Jewish apocalypses) nature fills a larger space than in S. John and the Epistles. What a different kind of feeling is shewn in the narrative of the stilling of the storm in the synoptists, and in the turning of water into wine in the Fourth Gospel.

In this Epistle both verses of Ps. viii. are quoted. Yet in its main argument the view is limited to the simple line, God and man. And there are reasons for this. One is indicated by an oracular saying in Coleridge's *Table Talk*, "Man does not move in cycles though nature does. Man's course is like that of an arrow; for the portion of the great cometary ellipse which he occupies is no more than a needle's length to a mile." But a better reason is, that only along this line can we recognize persons and the divine affections which make personality valuable. No one can read Professor Bethune Baker's *Nestorius and his Teaching* without feeling how deeply Nestorius had entered into the spirit of this Epistle. He quotes a remarkable reference of Nestorius to the penalty he had incurred by "not employing the word 'ousia,' but merely, 'love,' and maintaining that by this He is called Lord and Christ and Son"; he narrowed his appeal to the penetrating line of

¹ Cf. an article by Mr. Jesse Berridge in *The Interpreter*, Oct. 1912, on "Christ in Nature and Nature in Christ."

personal experience, and that is just what the writer to the Hebrews has done.

In man then, and man's history that writer finds great sacraments. The Christs of the Old Testament were sacraments of God's presence in Israel. There has been a priesthood in the world from the beginning (not the Levitical) which is a sacrament of salvation. And yet all these have so far appeared but as various flashings of the one sacrament which he is persuaded has at last been seen in perfection in the days of the flesh of Jesus the Christ.

Why is he persuaded of this? Because the Church of Christ to which he belongs, the family in which he is a brother, has in one form or another always asserted it. The life of this family, in which he has found peace and power, has been sufficient proof to him that the tradition is true. He is about to present the tradition in a new form to suit the minds and circumstances of his friends, but he is not about to proclaim a new truth, or find new evidences, or prove the faith by logical conclusion. We shall not appreciate his letter fairly unless we remember that this tradition of the Church lies behind it. Nor is it less important to remember that his aim is moral rather than intellectual; he desires his friends to do a hard duty for Jesus Christ's sake and in Jesus Christ's power. Let them do that and he is no longer anxious about their intellectual conviction. No thorough student of the Epistle will suspect the author of starving the intellectual part of men, but he does give us a strong hint as to the proper way of nourishing the intellect; it must have moral work to do else it will starve.

So then, he takes the common faith of the Church ; that Jesus who walked in Galilee, and died upon the Cross, is the very Christ of God, who now reigns in heaven, and will appear again to His faithful servants. The fishermen Apostles had known Him in Galilee, and simply looked forward to His coming in glory. S. Paul had occupied his Greek converts little with the Galilean days, but told them how by death He had entered upon His redeeming power, and how by His Spirit they even now must dwell in Him. These Alexandrine scholars are a stage later in time, and a degree more advanced in reflexion, and probably more closely tied to Palestine than S. Paul's Gentiles were,¹ and they do look back upon the days of their Lord's flesh. They see the narrowness and weakness of those days ; the sharing in the ordinary limitations of men ; nay, in extraordinary limitations, for no wealth, rank, scholarship, no faculty for pompous achievement, could be discerned there. They saw too, the Passion and the Cross, and they were near enough to the tragedy to realize the details of such a criminal execution—to the Greeks foolishness ; there is no sign of their friends having to rebuke them for Greek levity on the subject—to the Jews a scandal ; read the Epistle and judge whether there be no hint that they had been scandalized. There is the difficulty ; the scandal of the Cross and of the commonplace human

¹ For Palestinian interest in "the days of His flesh," cf. Swete, *The Ascended Christ*, p. xv. n. "The words *καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώποις πολιτευσάμενον*, which Eusebius of Caesarea (Socr. *H.E.* i. 8), quotes in his appeal to the ancient creed of his own Church, stand alone as a reference to the Lord's life in Palestine. See Dean Stanley's remark upon them in *Eastern Church*, p. 157." The references to the Holy Land in the Greek Liturgy of S. James have no real bearing on first century thought, but the creed of Caesarea probably has.

days that led up to it. Here is the hope of solution; the Old Testament history and the Platonic philosophy, both of which had accustomed those readers to the idea of a sacrament; and (we may venture to add) a delicacy and courage in their hearts since they were ready to risk life for a patriotic scruple, and could appreciate heroism when pointed out to them, however deeply disguised in what was commonplace and shocking.¹

On this hope, then, the author builds. He sets forth this earthly life, these days of the flesh, this humiliation, as themselves the sacrament of the divine Christ's ineffable work for men. He has a magnificent plan. He finds a deep spiritual idea of priesthood, of bringing Godward, to be at the heart of all natural life from the beginning of the world, and he marshals his Lord's earthly life on those ascending lines which run up into the will of God. Here is indeed the sacrament of sacraments. In it the visible and the eternal are really one. They seem two, because the unity is effected by life, growing, suffering, loving life, which on its earthly side seems to come to an end. But no one can contemplate this life without perceiving whither it tends, and no one (this is of the essence of the sacrament) can share this life without

¹ This glory in humiliation—more than mere *Kenosis*—had already been described briefly and forcibly in Col. ii. 15: ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρηγορίᾳ θριαμβεύσας αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ, “having stripped off the garment of authorities and powers which seemed His right, He publicly flouted such shows of divinity after having led them like captives in His truly triumphal progress to the Cross.” The wrong Kenotic theory is one “that eliminates the Divine consciousness of the incarnate Son of God” (Bethune Baker, *Nestorius*, p. ix). That Divine consciousness is just what the apocalyptic view of the Gospel guards. Cf. Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, pp. 265 ff.: “This I believe to be the profoundest motive operating in the Kenotic theories—this sense of sacrifice on the part of a pre-existent One.”

passing onward with it. A great plan interwoven with every sentence of the letter, so that we do violence to it by analysing it. Yet for our present purpose we must analyse, and in this preliminary view we will leave out the priestly idea, and attend as far as possible to the general aspect of the sacrament only.

First there is a perfectly frank recognition of the real manhood of the Lord.

His life and work are real history handed down from himself, through those who heard Him, to the author and his friends (ii. 3). "Jesus" the private personal name, by which this particular man was known on earth, is the name regularly used in the Epistle. He has a more famous name, "Christ," but it too is human, and has been borne by others before Him, and He has received it by inheritance from them. Nay, even the still greater name of Son of God had been enjoyed by those earlier Christs, and that name too He has received by inheritance (i. 4). A Psalm is quoted (ii. 6 ff.) to shew that all men had from God the promise of glory, which promise, in the face of the vastness of nature and the littleness of men, was hard to believe. It has been fulfilled in Jesus, not as might have been expected, but by His final and perfect readiness for a shameful death. That death was a real sharing in the grim destiny of human flesh and blood, but *therefore* it was the opportunity for sympathy, love, championship, propitiation. So runs the argument in ch. ii., and each time the exaltation, the completed work of salvation is declared in this Epistle, it is introduced by a picture of His humiliation as a means of sympathy and union. How could He taste death for each and all? So we ask, and

so those Hebrews asked. The first answer given by their friend is, "by the grace of God" (ii. 9), God chose it should be so. The sacramentalist begins from God, and the author of this Epistle was not one to make little of the tradition (as we should say, the dogma) of the Church. But no one can read on without feeling that the further answer is, "because it was necessary and natural"; close linked as He was with other men by nature and by love, His obedience to the will of God could not but carry theirs with it "if they would."

Obedience seems a cold word perhaps. But like blood and sacrifice, obedience is a word which takes on brighter colours in times of danger, hard tried loyalty, renunciation. S. Paul spoke movingly to the Philippians of the Lord's obedience. John Inglesant's master said some fine things about obedience to him, which are more open to our criticism than they would have been to men who were about to choose their side in the wars of Charles I. In a storm at sea obedience is no commonplace virtue. Perhaps to those Hebrews in the days of Titus obedience was a highly sacramental word. If their Lord's life on earth was a noble act of obedience its commonplace or shocking character would look different. In any case ch. x., with its doctrine of consecration in the will of God, the author's prayer in ch. xiii., which so unobtrusively shews how his own will had been lost and found in the divine will, and that astonishing phrase, "Son though He be, He learned obedience by suffering," sufficiently declare that the obedience spoken of in this Epistle was no common achievement. The obedience of Jesus Christ rightly marked carries the mind very far; the obedience of Jesus

Christ shared in might lift a man into the eternal sphere, as no doubt it often has done. Is not that the kind of thing that sacramental means?

Dwell a little longer on the assertion that He "learned obedience." It is parallel to what we read in S. Luke's Gospel: "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men." Those words immediately follow others which record His obedience to "His parents," and perhaps we are not forbidden by the latest science of the Greek language to infer from the tense gradual progress in that obedience. But there is more here. The obedience here spoken of is directly due to the Father in heaven. It is associated with the strong crying and tears, apparently in Gethsemane. It issued in the perfection which only appeared at last in the death of the Cross. That is certainly this writer's view of the course of our Lord's earthly life; that it was not perfect till the end—a view which (like so much in the Epistle) has a modern colour, as may be seen by comparing Dr. Tennant's discussion of "perfection" in *The Concept of Sin*, ch. iii. In the passage of ch. ii., already referred to, the crowning with glory and honour must, on any natural rendering of the Greek, precede the death; it is "in order that he may taste death for every one"; the Ascension is not yet spoken of.¹ That passage and this in ch. v. explain one another. The idea is that our Lord gradually

¹ The modern opinion that a king enters on kingship by being crowned has hindered frank acceptance of the Greek phrasing, which Blass recognized as so clear that (without documentary authority) he altered the verb to ἐγεύσατο. But in the Epistle the ancient and especially Jewish opinion that enthroning made a king still holds. The crown of ch. ii. is the garland of sacrifice or feasting. To the author's loyal eye the Lord went gallantly to

learned more and more of the will of the Father, and more and more of perfect submission to and in that will. Only at last was the way of the Cross and no other way seen and accepted. There are suggestions of the same idea in other apostolic writings, for instance in S. John's Gospel, xiii. 31: "When therefore he was gone out Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." The three loving efforts to turn Judas from his purpose had failed. Retreat was absolutely cut off. The Lord accepted the sign as from His Father. In the now inevitable pain and shame obedience was carried forward to completion. The crowning with glory and honour had well begun. We know that there was a further question of the necessity of the Cross in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Epistle treats the agony of that renewed uncertainty, and the deliverance from it, as a further learning of obedience. How far the lesson was continued, what was the precise moment when we may contemplate Jesus finally crowned for the suffering of death, none dares to say. Only we may be sure that the author of this Epistle would bid us look for that supreme moment of earthly honour in the quite supreme moment of earthly shame, weakness, failure, and he would hardly be shocked at the suggestion, which has been tentatively made by some people lately, that the moment was reached in the cry, "*Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani.*" He would not be shocked, for you could never go too far for him in recognizing the real manhood of his Lord. The

the Cross. And in considering his obligations to an oral or written Gospel, the crown of thorns would come into the question at this point. Cf. *The Epistle to the Hebrews, the First Apology for Christianity*, by Dr. A. B. Bruce, who took the Greek in the natural sense, and defended it by his fine chapter on "The Humiliation of Christ and its Rationale."

more real His human limitations, the more utter His humiliation, so much the more scope for that ever deepening trust and obedience towards the Father which so transformed appearance into reality, and base appearance (according to the measure of man) into heroic, glorious, life-giving reality according to the measure of God and of God's Spirit in such men as would understand.

"The necessity for compression is a school of literary virtue." It has certainly had much to do with forming that literary virtue which is common to all the books of the New Testament and conspicuous in Hebrews. Of the six Greek words in this phrase (v. 8) four are proverbial. The author has deepened that ancient wisdom by adding the special object "the obedience," and he has made the whole vivid by connecting it with the moving incident of Gethsemane. But the reflective reader perceives how much more than that one incident lies behind the phrase. Nestorius used it to sum up a sketch of the Gospel ministry (see Bethune Baker, *Nestorius*, p. 128), and it serves the purpose so exactly that we may infer from comparison with our written Gospels that the author of Hebrews knew far more of the life of our Lord on earth than he has occasion to repeat. In the symbolical narrative of the temptation we seem to see our Lord testing and rejecting three possible ways of accomplishing His purpose. Those three ways are disallowed as having sin in them, and it is perhaps worth while to notice at once that our Lord's progress in obedience cannot imply progress from sinful habit, however slightly sinful, to sinlessness. We say "cannot" because the writer of the Epistle says so. He says it simply, without argument, as he does in all places where

the inference may fairly be that he follows a Church tradition known and accepted by his friends. Progress in obedience does not mean passing from disobedience to obedience, but deepening and enriching obedience by the increase of understanding, joy, peace, love, courage, and correspondingly by a concentration of general obedience on a definite act. The reader of this Epistle is continually brought back to Platonism, and schooled to refuse the vulgar admiration for the infinite, only he is nearer to real life in this school than in Plato's. "If nature is divine, and law the sign of God's presence, the conclusion is Platonism. If to these we add a third truth, that through sorrow lies the path of life, the conclusion is the Gospel," wrote Dr. Bigg in his preface to a translation of S. Augustine's *Confessions*; that third truth is the defining as well as the vivifying one.

At no point then, in this course of learning obedience, was there the least act of sin; rather the first stage in the lesson was the absolute refusal of all sinful methods, and the narrative of the temptation as it stands in our written Gospels is highly true to nature; the lives of all the mystics corroborate it. It comes at the beginning, is brief and sharp. It is of the nature of conversion, though (according to the tradition our author accepts) supreme in its degree; it is absolute and final, but the starting-point of a far-reaching development of character. Then this development may be traced. Even a superficial reading of the Gospels illustrates it. We see the Lord trying the way of kindness and instruction; that was blocked by the opposition roused on the Sabbath in the Synagogue where he healed the withered hand. He was put out of the Synagogue, excommunicated, and

learned that lesson of obedience; it was the Father's will that he should renounce that quiet way. He therefore appointed the twelve Apostles, and founded even at once something like a Church of His own; by gathering a chosen few round Him, by holding those without at arm's length for a while, He will win the world. But even in the sacred circle He is little understood; after the feeding of the five thousand all were offended at His doctrine of the bread of life except the Twelve; and presently the Twelve themselves were offended at His prediction of His death; and at last one of the brotherhood of the Twelve betrayed him. It would be easy to elaborate further, to shew for instance the hope aroused at first by the friendly interest of the Pharisees, and how this changed into disappointment, till at last the answer about the tribute money threw the Pharisees into the arms of the openly hostile party. Wherever we looked we should find the same process going on; road after road tried and proving a blind alley; the Lord accepting each disappointment as an intimation of the Father's will. Finally, all ways shut to Him but the way of the Cross, and that a way along which He must go alone. At last the trials before the high priest and Pilate and Herod, and then the Cross; through all of which tumult and confusion He moved as Victor and Lord, with His mind made up and His purpose clear, "crowned with glory and honour for the suffering of death."

Even the superficial reader may discover some such general plan. But it is neither safe nor right to be a superficial reader of the Gospels in these days. A general plan must be tested, corrected, reduced to accuracy by careful observation and severe criticism, if it is to be

more than a plan; if it is to live and produce life as an idea. This testing, correcting and reducing has been going forward in the study of the Gospels. Two centuries ago a series of truth-loving men turned from the conventional notions of Christ to the Gospels, bent on discovering anew who and what Jesus of Nazareth was. Whether they were conscious of it or not, their search was a protest against the Arianism of popular theology, which had substituted for Him who is truly man and truly God the figure of one who was neither quite man nor quite God, but something between the two.¹ As so often, reverence had produced this Arianism, but it was a spurious reverence because it partook of an untruth, and its effect was not the word of salvation. These enquirers were not, perhaps, always reverent. The author of Job did not imagine his hero as always reverent, and there is some excuse for the hard words of those who receive hard words in their protest against popular error. Some of them, perhaps, concentrated their attention so much upon the manhood of our Lord that they separated it from his Godhead—separating instead of distinguishing—and were careless of the Godhead altogether. Yet their fault in general was another. They read the Gospels in the light of their own age. They did violence to the records instead of practising the scrupulousness of true criticism. They compelled them to yield such a Lord as a religious philosopher in eighteenth or nineteenth-century Europe could understand.

¹ Their endeavour might be expressed in the words which Nestorius used against the Apollinarians: τὰ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος τῷ τῆς θεότητος ἀσωμάτῳ μὴ συνασσωματώσωμεν, “let us not do away with the corporeal character of the things of the manhood because of the incorporeal character of the Godhead.” Quoted by Bethune Baker in *Nestorius and His Teaching*, p. 113.

That however was the first vague working of the idea which needed to be harnessed to the yoke of science before it could do service. The harnessing followed presently. Patient study of the documentary facts compelled students to recognize that the fourth Gospel was of a different character from the three synoptic Gospels, and not so clearly historical; that S. Mark was the earliest of those three, and had been used in the composition of the other two; that, as a purely historical record, S. Mark's claimed special attention. But then came the inevitable observation that the Christ in S. Mark was so very different from the Christ whom men had long expected to find; in some respects more like the Christ of the Church's obstinate tradition than the Christ of those who had insisted on His simply human, benevolent, reforming, teaching character. In S. Mark He was a wonder-worker, dominating the crowds, more set on dying for men than on reforming their religion. "Till our eyes become accustomed to the atmosphere, it is difficult to recognize the conventional Saviour with the gentle unindividualized face, in the stormy and mysterious Personage portrayed by the second Gospel" (Burkitt, *Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, p. 49). And with all this new difficulties still arose. This Jesus claimed to be the Christ, yet often refused to let His claim be published. There seemed to be an inconsistency running through even the oldest and most naïve record. There is a non-Messianic picture broken by crude Messianic lights. And some recent critics have worked out that inconsistency with such elaborate detail as has forced them to the conclusion that we possess no trustworthy account at all of those early days; we must

confess that we know next to nothing of the Lord Jesus.

A dreary conclusion ; but even before it had been reached, another school of students had met it. The way had been prepared by discoveries made by explorers in the strange seas of Jewish apocalypse. The last centuries of Judaism had proved to be filled with far more varied interests than narrow legalism. Psalms, wisdom books, fragments of prophecy, belong to those centuries, and reveal a deeper and broader faith, thought, and devotion than had marked the earlier times. Beside these a number of apocalyptic pieces had appeared. These apocalypses had all the vagueness and extravagance of popular emotion. They were inferior in literary art and in sobriety of temper to the canonical apocalypse of Daniel, but that perhaps only increased their influence upon the masses, just as our vulgar notions of heaven in these days are shaped more from hymns than from the Scriptures. Or perhaps it was an influence less of books at all than of a common, growing thought. Our Lord, according to Reimarus,¹ declared the immediate realization of a world of ideas which were already working in the hearts of thousands. At any rate, the influence was wide and strong, and it made in this direction ; it turned men's minds from earth to heaven, to a heaven beyond this life ; it made them hope for the coming of the reign of God, the reversal of all worldly measurements, the glory and happiness of the humble and meek ; and for the coming of Christ as King for God, a Christ vaguely and even inconsistently pictured, yet ever tending, after more pious

¹ Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, p. 16.

views had begun to discipline the idea, towards pre-existence, spiritual power and exaltation, divinity. A vague hope, but always fiery; apt to degenerate into a dream of revolutionary politics, but apt also to recover its purity, since the essence of the hope was that God, not man, not even the Christ himself, would bring about the event; God's will and the acquiescence of His saints would be the moving power.

The later centuries of Judaism ran into the days of the Lord's flesh; it was "at the end of these days" that He came. In His days Palestine, and especially Galilee, was full of thoughts like these. Hence, in the first place, it is not surprizing that the Christ of the Gospels should be by no means exclusively concerned with opposing the dryness of legalism; the theological position of the Gospels was not just the same as that of the earlier group of S. Paul's Epistles. Again, what so many were thinking around Him would naturally have a large place in the Lord's mind also. Unso-phisticated readers of the Gospels have always supposed that our Lord claimed to be the Christ; that the whole argument from prophecy rests on that claim; that the main significance of the Gospel life is just the reality of His Christship. The more subtle critics of the last two centuries had been inclined to tell them they were mistaken, that teaching, reforming, laying down eternal principles of morality, establishing faith in the Fatherhood of God in the place of the observance of a rigid law, was His main work; the Christhood was but a temporary Jewish setting; it might be largely disregarded; some of the passages in which it was too crudely presented might be even excised from the original and spiritual Gospel,

as added in a later, more literal age. The misgiving would arise that when such critics said "spiritual" they really meant "intellectual"; at any rate this new apocalyptic school would tell the unsophisticated reader that he was right—at least with regard to the broad fact; the Lord's claim to be the Christ, and His exercise of Christhood, are the main truths of the primitive Gospel. It is not a non-Messianic picture broken by Messianic lights, but a spiritually Messianic picture, in which every detail gains intensity by being interpreted in harmony with the Messianic whole.

As to the particular inconsistency, that He claims to be Christ yet forbids people to hear it, these critics answer their opponents that the two statements are both true, but that there is no inconsistency. Once more let the record be read as it stands and as a whole, and it will appear that the Lord knew from the first, or at least from some early point in His ministry, that He was the Christ, but this knowledge He kept secret, not only forbidding proclamation but making no acknowledgement in public of it; that in the regions of Caesarea Philippi, just before the going up to Jerusalem to die, He shared His secret with the Twelve; that as the Christ He went to Jerusalem to die for the coming of the Kingdom; that this claim and expectation—so blasphemous and dangerous as it would appear—was what Judas Iscariot betrayed, thereby giving the chief priests a legal hold upon his Master; that before the high priest the Lord himself confessed His claim and prophesied that they would see the Son of Man (an apocalyptic title) coming with the clouds; and that for this so-called blasphemy, and in that strangely expressed hope, He died,

So far we must admit that this latest critical reading of the Gospel is remarkably satisfactory. Except the guess as to the substance of Judas Iscariot's information, nothing has been read into the text. The text has been interpreted simply, not subtly. There has been no cutting out of words, lines, paragraphs. The worst that could be said would be that little use has been made of a large part of the Gospels in which the teaching rather than the action of our Lord is recorded. Let us with regard to this remark that the same fault might be found with the Epistle to the Hebrews in which references are made to the Lord's descent from the tribe of Judah, His pain, shame, suffering, faithfulness, His education in obedience, His death outside Jerusalem, His exaltation and continued life, but there is little or nothing about His teaching.

But it would, of course, be absurd to suppose that our Lord did not teach. It is indeed another established result of modern scientific observation of documentary facts that a record specially concerned with His teaching underlies parts of S. Matthew and S. Luke which are independent of S. Mark. This record is, considered as a document, still rather shadowy; we do not know, for instance, how far a narrative of the Lord's doings, and especially of his Passion and Death, may have been part of it. However that may be, there is a great deal in our Gospels about our Lord's teaching, and, on the whole, the impression left by this series of words and discourses is that His thoughts on all subjects, and especially on the coming kingdom, were far more wonderful than other people's at that time, and that we should be very cautious in so interpreting the record of His actions, predictions,

and commands, as to say that He expected precisely this or that to happen, or that He was affected by the popular thought of those days in precisely this or that manner. On the other hand, there is nothing in this mass of teaching to alter our general impression from the rest of the Gospels, that our Lord's main hope for the world was the coming of the Kingdom of God speedily and with power. And the remarkable and important point is that the teaching is strongly marked throughout with a summons to renunciation, to a self and world-forgetting course, to a heroic humility, and a trust in God so absolute as to seem hardly right among men who have to uphold justice in a practical world, and to earn their own living so that they may always have to give to them that need. The world has lasted on, and we are compelled to read the Sermon on the Mount in a modern translation. So were S. Paul and the Apostolic Church; but their translation was more literal than ours is apt to be. The spirit of "seek first the kingdom," and "take no thought for the morrow," is evident in the ventures of faith and the enthusiastic service of those days, as reflected in the New Testament Epistles, and the appeal of this Epistle to the Hebrews is just that appeal from conventional honour and common-sense belief to the paradox of glory in humiliation and faith in a seemingly impossible ideal of the divine destiny of manhood, and in the miracle of cleansing from sin.

That is but a single touch, one of many "undesigned coincidences" which go to shew how a divine power really was at work among men in those days. They really were great days in which it would be rash to say *a priori* that any thing which was necessary to salvation

could not have happened. Only the caution must be accepted in both directions. There was a greater power than we should reasonably expect, but that power may have displayed itself in modes which seem to us almost incredibly surprising. The more we submit our prejudices to the evidence that an honest criticism of our documents yields, the more we are compelled to believe with S. Paul that this kind of strength is made perfect in weakness. "How they supposed that this could be we know not; many thoughts were doubtless possible then which do not occur to us now." So said Dr. Hort in one of his Christmas sermons, anticipating, as he so often did, in very simple and few words a great deal of recent criticism. Many thoughts were possible then, to the Lord as well as to His disciples, even the thought so strange to us that the Kingdom of God might come—visibly, symbolically, or in what other conceivable mode—that perhaps matters not; but at any rate at once and effectively—with power.

This was the hope which we observe in that little circle into which our Lord was born. The "quiet in the land" that little circle has very beautifully been called. Yet S. Luke tells us that the mother of our Lord herself looked for the Son who was to be born to her to put down the mighty from their seats—for the past tenses are surely "prophetic—to exalt the humble and meek, to fill the hungry with good things, and to send the rich empty away. It was to be the kingdom coming with power, with revolutionary power; the language is more like the language which has ushered in later and violent revolutions than we are sometimes content to admit. Has criticism proved that the *Magnificat* is merely a

poem of later date put by S. Luke into the mouth of the blessed Virgin? No. Critical minds have guessed this, but no proof has ever been forthcoming. "Dr. Sanday gives it as his opinion, which is worth something, that the first two chapters (of S. Luke) are shewn by internal evidence to be based on one of the oldest Christian documents," wrote Dr. Headlam in the *Guardian*, 3rd November 1911. Perhaps Dr. Sanday's opinion rests on something short of actual proof, but the apocalyptic reading of the Gospel comes to confirm his somewhat different arguments. Strange though it may appear, these apocalyptists, these enthusiasts for an astonishing idea, are far more akin to sober critics of Dr. Sanday's type than to the so-called bolder ones. Like Dr. Sanday, they trust to observation and mistrust prejudice. Existing evidence is more to them than the feeling that such and such a thing is likely or unlikely. Evidence must indeed be sifted. It may be confused or false. But it is more misleading still to suppose that what seems unlikely to a sober scholar in these disillusioned modern days, would necessarily have been unlikely in Galilee when "the people were expecting and reasoning in their hearts whether this one or that were haply the Christ." The apocalyptists say that Jesus of Nazareth was in the days of His flesh a Jew of Galilee, born into times and among people, thoughts, and hopes, which are highly "unlikely" to us; that in His own heart there was lighted a faith and hope which blazed up¹ in a manner still more unlikely to us; and that,

¹ Cf. S. Luke xii. 49 and the Collect in the Roman Missal (Sabbato quatuor temporum Pentecostes), "Illo nos igne, quaesumus Domine, Spiritus sanctus inflammet : quem Dominus noster Jesus Christus misit in terram : et

when once we admit this unlikelihood, the sifting of the evidence becomes much simpler; it turns out to be significant and therefore trustworthy almost as it stands, unlikely though that seemed to the earlier critics. Compare Nestorius again: "Nothing is concealed: all the human things which men now blush to say of Him the Evangelists were not ashamed to say" (quoted by Bethune Baker, *Nestorius*, p. 155).

There can be little doubt that this apocalyptic idea will be modified in course of time. To begin with, it is an idea still, partly old and partly new. By these ideas thought lives, but in order to make them work ideas have to be broken into science. We advance in a circling course which seems monotonous when described, but is exhilarating when we (as the Epistle puts it) are ourselves being borne onward by the power which is Christ, in an eternal progress whose goal is perfection with God. It is a circling course in which again and again the same points are passed, but with each turn at a higher level. An idea seizes us. We apply it to all kinds of life, thought, action, and it explains and heartens us. Then criticism breaks in. This or that is pointed out to which our idea will not apply; here or there it is proved that we have left off thinking, moving; that we are repeating conventions, and that the conventions are no longer true. We are forced once more to halt as it seems, but really the halt is the starting-point for fresh advance. We halt however, and painfully examine again the facts on which all knowledge rests. The old complain that *voluit vehementer accendi.*" This Collect illustrates what seems to be coming more and more into notice, the fidelity of the Western Church to important elements of primitive tradition. Father Tyrrell pressed this characteristic with regard to the apocalyptic spirit in *Christianity at the Cross-roads*.

foundations are being cut away; the young exult in the promise of new truth. Presently old and young appear to be coming together again over a poor compromise; and then, when all seems to be settling into dullness, the new idea rises from, or is sent down upon, the reordered material, and we perceive that material by itself is not knowledge, but only the enclosed space in which knowledge is shaped, refreshed, and made effectual — *ἐν θησαυροῖς σοφίας παραβολὴ ἐπιστήμης*, “in the treasuries of criticism is the mystery of reasonable faith.” And so the new-old idea goes forth, itself presently to be outworn and criticized again, and then again changed in order to be effectual. There is perhaps a momentary point at which idea and criticism are in harmony and full power, but perhaps not—let us be borne on to perfection and never boast that it is to be found in human affairs; the real power is in the unceasing process of this upward circling. Only such experience warns us that our apocalyptic scholars will not prove to have told us the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; rather they have, in a quasi-sacramental way, flashed a light by which we see a truth and turn back to work it out.

What they have given us is the new idea which has just arisen out of a period of discipline. It will have to undergo discipline in its turn. Even now we can see that this idea which seems so startling and original is but part of a more general movement of thought. Students of ancient Greek religion have said that the vital thing there was not the majestic serenity of the Olympian cult, but the repellent faiths of older days and of the masses all along, because in those faiths the notions of sin and holiness and propitiation were hidden,

notions which in later times were to come to the front again in the mysteries with their promise of purification, communion with God, new life.¹ Historians of Israel are not only taking account of the apocalypses, but in the great prophets of the eighth century they recognize "gales of passion," in which Jahveh spoke to them,² rather than the calm reasonable faith with which (as but a few years ago was taught) they opposed the superstitions of their day. Artists and musicians are turning away from conventional forms, and seeking what is strong rather than beautiful, or even what is bizarre. And the latest word in philosophy is the proposal to trust less in intellect and more in will, less in the logical reason and more in intuition. Mr. Streeter says in his essay on *The Historic Christ* that Schweitzer "himself cannot quite escape the charge of modernizing, and that his own boldly out-lined portrait is a little like the superman of Nietzsche draped in Galilean robes."

Of course we may accept the apocalyptic principle without following Schweitzer wherever he leads, but more than the following of Schweitzer is in question. The whole apocalyptic criticism is in close connexion with the general tendency of these times. Even the supremacy of S. Mark's Gospel, from which that criticism sprang, fits curiously into the tendency. The early philosophizing critics held by S. John; their successors, who valued especially the teaching of Christ, held by S. Matthew,

¹ Cf. Miss Harrison's *Prolegomena to Greek Religion*, that delightful book which might be described as the antidote to the *dictum* of Maximus Tyrius: τὸ μὲν Ἑλληνικὸν τιμᾶν τοὺς θεοὺς ἐνόμισε τῶν ἐν γῆ τοῖς καλλίστοις ἕλη μὲν καθαρᾷ μορφῇ δὲ ἀνθρωπίνῃ τέχνῃ δὲ ἀκριβεῖ (Diss. viii. 3, quoted by Dill, *Roman Society in the Time of Nero*, p. 382).

² See Hamilton, *The People of God*, i. p. 143.

the Gospel of the Sermon on the Mount; the modern critic holds by S. Mark with its portrayal of "the stormy and mysterious Personage." The earlier critics, like the modern, thought they were obeying historical evidence, and used the most scientific scholarship that was available. We can now perceive their bias. It is hard to avoid the suspicion that future generations may perceive our unconscious bias as well as the imperfection of our literary science. Indeed it is conceivable that a reaction against taking hard statement of facts for history may presently set in; that the claim of the artist to be more truthful in his large view than the realist in his close view may be recognized as resting on something more measurable than mere taste; and that a generation may arise to whom S. Luke shall seem the most trustworthy evangelist, because his Gospel shews less of natural growth, more of the creative mastery of the artist.

On the other hand, we must remember that such reactions are not only to be guessed at in the future. Even now reaction follows fast on former reaction. Already there are many who feel that the setting up of intuition against reason is dangerous to philosophy; others that the enthusiasm for apocalyptic morality shews a lack of gratitude for the past and faith for the future, when they consider the improvement that sober, legal, brotherly methods have produced; the apocalypticist seems to hope for the "saving" of the elect; the Church for the "taking away" of the sin of the world. Hence they are unwilling to allow that the Gospel sprang out of the apocalyptic stress of the days of our Lord's flesh. But perhaps these objectors do not sufficiently distinguish between the apocalyptic beginning and the inter-

pretation and adaptation of that beginning by the exalted Christ himself through the Spirit. That interpretation and adaptation is already evident in the rest of the New Testament. Because this evokes especial sympathy is no reason for rejecting the evidence for the earlier fact. And however our science may be presently improved, it is really impossible for this generation to doubt that the apocalyptic view has shewn, more clearly than was ever shewn before, what did actually happen, even though a large margin be left for future correction in the explanation offered of those things that happened.¹

One possible correction might be this: the difficulty of distinguishing between what is literal and what symbolical in our Lord's language may have to be reconsidered. That may compel us to take account of something more secret and more universal in His mind than the fresh enthusiasm for this idea is inclined to admit. So the limitations of particular manhood to which our records witness may prove compatible with much variety of thought and character. There is nothing to forbid our discerning in the heroic Christ of Galilee wise foresight and a simply but all the more

¹ Some of these objections are expressed in a very attractive form by the Dean of St. Paul's in *The Church and the Age*, pp. 47 f. The weakness of his case is that he pays no attention to the historical difficulties which the apocalyptic critics have so boldly faced.

Some of the writers in the Oxford book of essays, *Foundations*, express what seems to be a general misgiving, viz. that the continued life of the Lord Jesus Christ, His present guidance and teaching through the Spirit, our communion with Him in His abiding life now, are truths which hardly appeal to the mass of men in these days. I should have fancied it was otherwise, and that, conscious as we are of historical difficulties, this is apt to appear to us the more essential and acceptable part of the faith. However that may be, it is the part of the faith on which the apocalyptic school lay especial stress. See the very noble words with which Schweitzer concludes *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*,

grandly philosophical intellect. And yet, when these and other reflexions have been made, the main idea will still be working—that our Lord was and is truly man; that this real manhood involved limitations on the one hand, but possibilities on the other, which are almost incredible to us in our land and century; that His heroism, love and purity (qualities which He can share with the humblest) have more sacramental affinity with His Godhead than any intellectual endowments might seem to give; that He himself believed His death would be for the sake of all men, and that this belief was, from the earthly point of view, shaped by the ancient and popular belief of Judaism, while from the divine point of view (could we attain to it) we should see the act of the Cross pre-ordained by God as the crown of that popular belief which God had himself directed; and finally, that the Cross becomes to us, as to our fathers, and to the Apostles, and to the primitive Church, and to the instinct of the Church in all ages—however usefully a liberal criticism may from time to time sift that faith—the central sacramental act of salvation. Yet that death will appear as no end but as a mysterious progress of life. In His continued and exalted life it will still be Christ himself who is interpreting these great words and deeds of the past, freeing His eternal purpose from the limitations of the days of His flesh. All this through the Spirit, His Spirit, in a richer sense since His Incarnation with those so fruitful limitations; the apocalyptic criticism brings a new reality into the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. And again, no small part of this interpretation carried forward by the living Christ through the Spirit will be moral rather than dogmatic,

the applying and defining of such large principles as "Give the other cheek to the smiter," and "Take no thought for the morrow," and "Sell all and give to the poor," and "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Only His interpretation will always be in conflict with the loose and selfish interpretation of the merely polite and prudent man or age. Perhaps in the end the most abiding and valuable truths which the apocalyptic criticism is restoring will be just these; that the heart of the faith once for all delivered is absolute trust in the heavenly Father, hope in judgement to come, real life only through the Spirit of God, renunciation as the basis of good citizenship—not the converse.

And for the means of testing all this, the apocalyptic view will perhaps more and more restore confidence in the Gospel records. It will not do away with the need of criticism. Different books and passages have their own different characters and purposes—the fourth Gospel was certainly not written by the same kind of author or for the same purpose as the three earlier Gospels. At every turn allowance must be made for the writer's point of view, his art or artlessness. But the day is quickly passing in which it will be considered scientific to cut out words and passages without external support for such bold treatment, or to rule that a whole book may be left out of count by the historian because it is not simply intended to be a record of fact. The apocalyptic school have already carried us a good distance in this direction. Is it rash to prophesy that they will carry us farther yet? Take as an example the *Magnificat* again. Here is a hymn put into the

mouth of the mother of our Lord by the evangelist, or as some MS. authority would suggest, into the mouth of the mother of the Baptist. In either case the older school of critics were inclined to decide that there could be nothing really historical here, it was so unlikely. But this hymn, for all its undertone of deepest spiritual faith, breathes a naïve spirit of apocalyptic expectation, and our new criticism suggests that this is just what would have been likely in the circumstances. But now look again at those early chapters of S. Luke. Another hymn, the *Benedictus*, also breathes this spirit, but with a difference. It looks for salvation in the remission of sins. If the simple hope of justice and the reversal of hard conditions was natural in the expectant mother, this righting of a deeper wrong as a surer means of regenerating the world would be natural in a priest experienced in the hearts of men. But yet another hymn remains, the aged Simeon's. His *Nunc Dimittis* is still apocalyptic, and still apocalyptic in the early Jewish manner. "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel," he seeks. But the hope is wrapt round here in a peace that passes the understanding of all but the very aged pilgrims in this world. Natural again, but is there not also a certain art here? The three hymns with their continuously deeper penetration; the three poets and the words which so dramatically fit them; this suggests art, while the common apocalyptic character suggests fact. It follows that the record should be trusted, but should be recognized as something more than record. It is what we get all through this Gospel—a simple, often unconscious, loyalty to fact, but an artist's interpretation added. Criticism must make allowance for this interpre-

tation before the theologian and the poet may enjoy it. But there is no need for the violence of criticism, the record is mainly, perhaps it may prove altogether, harmonious and just.¹

So again with the whole question of miracles. It is not unlikely that this may be reopened and examined again in consequence of apocalyptic criticism. For this puts the question in a new point of view, which is perhaps the old point of view on a higher plane, as the apocalyptic idea is itself an old idea in a more definite form—so life goes on :

“ If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.”

The historical evidence for miracles will always claim severe criticism. The pathetic sentence of Paulus is more than prejudice, it is the protest of conscience ; “ Ah ! how empty were religion if all depended on our believing miracles or not.”² But in an age when such strange thoughts were the raw material of such unexampled holiness and power, it would be rash to rule out lightly any miracle, however unlikely it may seem in these calmer days, so long as it was found to touch life on the moral side. And so again with the Fourth Gospel. The art of that Gospel, its reflective theology, its secondary character as a historical witness, are

¹ Cf. Mr. Box's Sermon, “ The Christian Messiah in the Light of Judaism Ancient and Modern ” (*JTS*, Ap. 1912). Mr. Box thinks these pieces “ translations of hymns, originally composed in Hebrew for liturgical use in the early Palestinian community of Hebrew Christians.”

² Quoted by Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus*, p. 50 : “ Ach wie leer wäre die Gottandächtigkeit oder Religion, wenn das Wohl davon abhinge, ob man Wunder glaube oder nicht.”

evident. It will never be used again in the old uncritical way. But the oftener it is read in the light of the apocalyptic idea, the more frequent are its points of contact found to be with the primitive state of things. The exclamation of the disciple at the beginning, for instance, that Jesus is the Christ, is so akin to those anticipatory recognitions which are common in the lives of the mystics. The scene may be imagined with the peculiar art of this evangelist; it may be more an idyll than a history. And yet it is so probable that it faithfully represents the way in which the general expectation of Galilee did burst out in an enthusiastic act of devotion which presently died down again into forgetfulness or doubt, and yet still lived and moved not far beneath the surface. Indeed it seems almost necessary that there should have been some force of that kind at work from the first if we would understand the awe and mystery with which, and even notably, in the record of S. Mark, the Lord of that Gospel is surrounded in His advance.

Morally the apocalyptic school have insisted on idealism. Intellectually they are showing the likeliness of the unlikely when distant times are in consideration. And that is the recovery of freedom for a generation which is in bondage to the limitations of a newly awakened historical imagination. We used not to exercise historical imagination very strenuously. We simply expected things in Holy Scripture to be quite different from things we knew, and scarcely asked ourselves how they could be real. Then the historical imagination was roused, and we insisted on a Christ who would be intelligible to ourselves, or with a still

deeper scepticism we despaired of realizing events and persons of so very long ago. Now at last that childish historical imagination is being disciplined, and we are learning to realize the distant past, but at the same time to realize it as far more different from the present than in our shortsightedness we might have wished. Only we know the thing is there; a steady eye can see it. History is not reduced to fancy by lapse of time. The days of the Lord's flesh, in which He learned obedience through suffering, really were the starting-point for the days of His presence through the Spirit, in which He removes the original scandals—the scandal of the limited manhood, of the unlikely, unpromising means of grace, of the Cross; and in which He guides His faithful into all that truth which perhaps the man Jesus himself, while He was learning obedience, but dimly saw.

That guidance through the Spirit goes on, and has, ever since the Crucifixion, gone on in very various ways. But one of the earliest and most evident ways were the books of the New Testament. Behind them all lies the primitive Gospel, largely apocalyptic. In each of them there is an explanation, a drawing out for contemporary use of the abiding truth of that primitive Gospel. If we can fix its context in the series, that will help us to understand the Epistle to the Hebrews. But it is still more important to remember the previous fact, that the author has this Gospel to appeal to, and that he finds in it some things which need explanation. A very masterly piece of explanation is that phrase from which our apocalyptic discussion started, "Son though He was, He learned obedience by suffering." It really anticipates, in the terse suggestive manner of the

apostolic men, all those discussions in which our generation has engaged, on the *Kenosis* a few years ago, and now on the apocalyptic disappointments of our Lord. According to—it would be unfair to say the apocalyptic school, but according to the tentative suggestion of some who have written on the subject, our Lord at an early stage in His ministry expected the Kingdom of God to come shortly, and by God's mere act, without further interference of His own. Therefore He sent forth His Twelve to proclaim the coming, and to call men to repent. And He promised them that they would not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Kingdom actually came. But the Twelve returned and the expected event had not happened. The Lord had been mistaken. But starting from that mistaken hope He revised and deepened it. Hitherto He had accepted the entirely passive rôle which the old apocalypses had generally assigned to the Christ. He did not give that up, but He received or created a more wonderful conception of Messianic obedience. The Father who had sent His servants, the prophets, to suffer and die would now send His Son to be revered after all no more than they had been; the Christ himself must die for His people, and then the Kingdom would indeed come. So He determined to go to Jerusalem to die. Before He went He shared the secret of His Christship with His disciples, and declared His purpose to them. He revealed His Christship and His hope to the high priest at the trial, and then He died, and still the Kingdom came not. "My God," he said on the Cross, "why hast thou forsaken me?"

Now this scheme of the Lord's life and work has

certainly proved a scandal of the Cross to many who have read it, to many even of those who have been otherwise gladly convinced of the truth of the apocalyptic view. How far may this scandal be avoided? How far raised from a scandal to rank in the power and the wisdom of God?

In the first place there may be error, as there of course must be imperfection, in such a scheme, nor have any scholars put it forward as more than a possible explanation. That the Lord did say and do such and such things is plainly stated in the records. These words and deeds fall in so reasonably with the apocalyptic view of His work that honest criticism accepts the record as true. But what our Lord thought is very largely hidden from us. We cannot pretend to know much about the hopes or disappointments of His secret heart, far less about the certainly very tremendous qualities which enabled Him to change disappointment into new and larger hopes. We may believe in the general apocalyptic purpose without defining the exact course in which it was carried out. We may venture a little farther—and the venture will make our Gospels more credible—and say that it is evident that our Lord did change or (if the word may be allowed) improve His hope as He went on, without presuming to suspect that His very death was an hour of disappointment. And yet if we ventured to give the most natural and the most intense meaning to that dreadful cry upon the Cross—a cry which the evangelists associate with the three hours' darkness, and seem to set apart, in unique and dreadful glory, as the very turning point of the tragedy; if frankly, though for that reason all the

more reverently, we do accept the Crucifixion not as a tragedy, but as *the* deepest, darkest tragedy in all history—what then? Is it not of the essence of tragedy that it should be sacramental, real within its own limited bounds, and therefore, so far as can be seen, so far as the actor in it knows, real disappointment, real failure? Yet the actor may have faith that goes beyond his knowledge, and the thing would be no tragedy but merely a horror if it did not point to a solution of the mystery of suffering in a sphere beyond its bounds.¹ After the bitter cry there were other, calmer words, according to some of our documents—and our new criticism bids us be slow to reject this evidence, especially as it is so much in harmony with general experience, for however terrible any death may be there is generally a respite to mind and body when strength is utterly flagging. But whether more or less be made of those last minutes, they are not sufficient to supply the solution of the mystery of a real tragedy. That always must be beyond its own bounds in the eternal sphere. If of a mimic tragedy upon the stage, it will be in the eternal sphere of that inward life of the spectator where the indwelling Spirit of God nourishes love, courage, resolution, hopes, which are men's personal hints of a life deeper than visible life. Such mimic tragedies would have no meaning if it were not for the Cross, either as endured on Calvary or as reflected in the suffering love of men before and after that supreme hour. And in the tragedy of the Cross the sphere beyond the tragedy itself was and is the exalted life of Jesus Christ. However clear, however dim, His understanding of these

¹ Cf. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, Lect. i.

divine purposes when He was dying on the Cross, on His entry into the perfection of that exalted life He knew—what? Let reverence again check our fancy. Those who believe in the mystery of manhood taken into God will not be facile in defining what that still more secret knowledge is. It is enough for us that He has taught us by His Holy Spirit, through the pen of His Apostles, and in very many other ways, that the Kingdom did come when He the Lord of the Kingdom died; not indeed in the form which some had imagined the old Jewish symbols implied, and yet in a power which has been more truly imaged by those symbols than by some of our modern interpretations; for the true Kingdom of God has always exercised its sovereignty when it has been understood to require conversion, renunciation, expectation of judgement, life in the Spirit, treasure in heaven not in this world.

And now let us look back on all this and consider whether the formula of our Epistle does not cover the boldest ventures of the apocalyptic critic, as well as the suspended judgement of the more reverent or the more timid; whether it does not cover the meditations of all who frankly allow this one truth, that our Lord has lived on earth a real manhood, with the limitations and therefore with the growth of real manhood—"Son though He were, He learned obedience through suffering."

CHAPTER IV

THE SACRAMENT OF THE INCARNATION : PERFECTION THROUGH LIMITATION

Our Lord's limitations were His opportunities—for perfecting trust in God the Father—for His own creative activity—and especially for His victory over sin—His sinlessness fulfilled Messianic expectation, became the norm of morality, and appears in this Epistle as the evidential miracle for His Godhead—But it does not separate Him from men ; it unites men with Him—As there was community in real temptation, so there is real participation in the victory—For the Christian ideal may not be denied ; sin is not one of the natural limitations of manhood.

WE have considered the frank recognition in this Epistle of the real manhood of our Lord and of the limitations involved in that manhood.

But it is through limitation that action, developement, accomplishment become possible. That is the idea which was always in Plato's mind ; God works through order. The argument of the *Timaeus*—that strange dialogue of creation, half philosophy half myth—has a certain kinship with the doctrine of Christ in Hebrews. God brings order out of the vague infinite, and so makes the universe divine. There is the same thought in Genesis : "There was the earth without form and void . . . and the Spirit of God moving over the face of the waters." Then definite step by definite step the formlessness is evoked into distinct forms of life ; and then

at once, in the following chapters, we see the battle of life begun. There is life all around, but our attention is concentrated on men. They are shut up in pain, weakness, all the baffling contradiction of faith and conscience. "He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also he hath set eternity in their heart, so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even unto the end." Hence the opportunities for sin are opened through the cramped will of men, and never again till the final vision of the Johannine apocalypse is the fair goodness of creation recovered. Yet if all this is the accompaniment of the limitations God had thus imposed, it is not the real meaning of those limitations. The real meaning of them is that they mark the definite path of possibilities which would otherwise be inconceivable; of the possibility, in one word, of that return to God which is more than a return, because it is a return enriched by life, struggle, and in the end redemption through suffering.

This paragraph has been Philonic. Not of course in the sense that it gives all the large, generous philosophy of Philo, but because it could not have been written if Philo had not commented on Genesis, and if his comment had not become part of the furniture of our minds whether or no we have read his books. Yet there is also in it something beyond what Philo could reach, not because he was not wise or humble or good enough to accept it, but simply because we have and he had not known the life of our Lord Jesus as the New Testament records and explains it. Philo could grasp by faith the meaning of the struggle of life. He did believe that even now there is, as it were, a central heart in the storm

wherein the soul achieves its return to God, and the good purpose of holiness and peace is accomplished. But he could see this only by glimpses and mistily. After all, when we look the realities of men's life in the face, we have to confess that only rarely and fitfully do some men for some moments gain an uncertain footing in that peaceful region. He knew, by inspiration as he called it, by intuition, conscience, as we would be more inclined to say—and yet does it matter? both he and we mean the Spirit of God within us—he knew that there must be a more permanent connexion between man and that perfection than these fitful exaltations of the private soul; and he expressed his conviction by his doctrine of the mediating Word. It is a doctrine too large—in the looser sense of the term, too divine—to be satisfying, though for a while, and to a superficial seeker, it may seem more spiritual, more catholic than it became in the hands of the Christian theologians. They did indeed confine it, bring it down into the friction of things, so that all manner of difficulties have ever since hindered this more defined faith. But they did this because they were instructed to do so by the limited, definite life of their Lord Jesus, and by the explanation which the Holy Spirit suggested to them of that life, the same Holy Spirit who had suggested to Philo his explanation of his vaguer material. The same Holy Spirit, and yet even here we recognize a defining and therefore in some sense a limiting, for since those days of the Lord's flesh the Holy Spirit has come to men as the Spirit of Jesus. "And when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not" (Acts xvi. 7). The passage is a good com-

ment on all this that we are trying to express. The defined Spirit of Jesus limited and defined the hitherto free range of the apostolic mission, but defined it in order to make it effectual. True possibility springs from real limitation.

Whether the author had read Philo, or much of Philo, is a question of literary criticism. Philonism is older than Philo, as Dr. Bigg shows in *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*. Yet it is difficult to avoid connecting Philo himself with the Epistle when Dr. Bigg brings together his descriptions of the Word as Archetypal Seal, Pattern, Divider, Mediator, the Highpriest who alone might enter the Holy of Holies, who is more than man, sinless, supplicator, who presents the soul of man before God, who is Melchisedech, priest of the Most High God, King of Salem, that is, of peace (pp. 17-20). This is his final summary: "Philo remained to the last a devout and trusted Jew. Yet he placed a new religion, a Greek philosophic system, above the faith of his fathers. He retained the Law as the worship of the Logos; high over this stands the free spiritual worship of the Eternal. The one is but the preparation, and in its ancient national form not even a necessary preparation, for the other. It will be obvious how this facilitated the task of the Christian teacher" (pp. 23, 24). Von Soden says roundly that "the Philonic logology is the armoury for the Christology of the Epistle," and that we should recognize its author as "the epoch-making man who has brought the Alexandrine, and especially the Philonic, theology into the service of Christianity, who undertook by its means to make Christianity intelligible to that age, and who believed that he could

find in Christianity the completion of Alexandrine speculation" (*Hand-Commentar*, p. 6).

The imperfection of Philo's philosophy is often pointed out, and no one can turn from his writings to this Epistle without feeling the surer touch of the Christian author. It often seems as though he had indeed borrowed serviceable terms from Philo's vocabulary, but had learned little else from him. Yet it would be rash to judge hastily. F. D. Maurice, in *The Kingdom of Christ* (Note D), exercises an insight even more sympathetic than Bigg's or Von Soden's into Philo's Christian affinities. He recognizes his defects. But the power of that little sketch lies in his concentration upon the religious affections rather than on the intellectual system of Philo. He is to Maurice the friend of "thoughtful men in the heathen world," who shews them what their philosophers were seeking after, "the living Word . . . the shepherd and teacher of the inner man."

There, it might seem, is the most intimate point of contact with the writer to the Hebrews. It is Philo's aspirations that he seems so often to have in mind. And he seems to recall them in no hostile or controversial spirit, but with the same yearning affection that he feels toward the glories of the Mosaic ritual, or the good priests he has known in the Levitical order—*Quem te, inquit, redidissem Si te vivum invenissem*. Just so in ch. ii. he renders Philo Christian. "As yet we do not see all things subjected to man. But the one man who has been made a little lower than the angels we do behold, namely, Jesus, already crowned for the suffering of death with glory and honour, so that by

the grace of God He should taste death for each and all."

Here is Philo's vague Word of God limited by manhood, particular manhood, suffering manhood; but in that limitation finding the definite way of rising through the will of God to do divine work. That divine work had been in Philo's hope almost wholly mediatorial. In the Epistle (and in all the books of the New Testament) it appears as mediatorial in the special way made possible by the limitation, viz. the way of redemption. For redemption is heroic work, and heroism can only be wrought in conflict with the trials of manhood. When in the Old Testament redemption is spoken of as God's work, this mode of expression is made possible by a context in which God is described in terms of manhood, as in Ex. xv., where He is called a Man of war, or in Is. lix., where He is pictured as a warrior arming himself and coming down to earth for rescue, because He had looked and seen that there was no man. It is in fact largely because of this free use of such bold imagery throughout the Old Testament that the Article (vii.) of the Church of England can recognize Christ in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. Philo's scrupulous translation of the imagery obscures the perception of that truth. Here in this chapter the language is certainly a natural sequel to the Old Testament, and a vigorous developement of Philo's vagueness into reality — "whence He owed it as a debt to be made like to the brethren in all things, in order that He might become a pitiful and faithful Highpriest on the Godward side, for propitiating the sins of the people. For in that He himself

hath suffered in trial and temptation He is able to come to the rescue of those who are going through like trial."

From all this it appears that it would be unprofitable to recognize the limitations of our Lord's earthly life, if we did not go on to consider how these limitations imply possibilities. We see our Lord on earth not as infinite, and therefore vague in power, but as definite, and therefore concentrated in purpose. For one "conquering and meaning to conquer" foreknowledge would be detriment. It is the trustful courage that lifts us with it to a higher courage than our own.

The concordance shows how characteristic of this Epistle are the words which express "perfection." This set of words may have some connexion with Levitical ritual, or with Philo, or with the Greek mysteries, or with the manhood suffrage of classical Athens, or with the meditations of Athenian dramatists on the obscure interplay of man's self-will with God's righteous purpose :

*Zeû Zeû τέλειε τὰς ἐμὰς εὐχὰς τέλει
μέλοι δέ τοι σοὶ τῶνπερ ἂν μέλλῃς τελεῖν*

"Zeus, Zeus, Perfecter, these my prayers perfect thou!
Thy care be—yea—of things thou mayst make perfect,"

as Browning paraphrased Clytaemnestra. We can however but guess at what the writer knew of ancient literature, and what we observe in his Epistle is little of the pedantry of quotation, but much interest in words themselves. Like Shakespeare with a word of Latin derivation, he loves to press the etymological significance, and in this group of words what he chiefly lays stress upon is the simple idea of perfecting, of bringing a life to its own particular completion. In the Gospel of S. John a single Greek word is used to translate, from

the Cross, the summary of our Lord's work on earth; *τετέλεσται*, "it has been carried to its appointed perfection." That might well express the view in Hebrews of these days of the flesh. They were hemmed in by limitations; in themselves obscure, weak, full of shame. That must first be recognized or we shall not understand them at all. But the great thing about them is that our Lord was always making the one right use of His limitations, bringing nobility out of lowliness, exercising in weakness the power given to Him, still in that contracted sphere of Galilean manhood *φέρων τὰ πάντα*, carrying on the universe to its destined perfection, since, however He might be limited in the reach of His arm or the foresight of His intellect, union with the will of God could not be hindered by these physical conditions.

The counterpart of this in ordinary lives is expressed in that philosophic doctrine of *Entsagung* of which Bishop Creighton made so much. In our Lord's own life a remarkable illustration is suggested by Dr. Burkitt's interpretation of *πάντα μοι παρεδόθη* in S. Mt. xi. 27, S. Lk. x. 22.¹ He connects the phrase with its context instead of with S. Mt. xxviii. 18, and interprets *πάντα* as "all my experiences, success and failure . . . for both I bless His name, because all things—success and failure—come to me from my heavenly Father. I can stand alone unrecognized, for He recognizes me; I stand alone, I and my disciples, but it is we who know God and recognize the signs of His visitation." At first sight this appears to yield a less impressive testimony to the unity of the Son with the Father

¹*JTS*, Jan. 1911.

than the ordinary interpretation does. But is it not really stronger? It is mystical rather than supernatural. It shews a victory of faith over the pressure of circumstances rather than a claim to immunity; it shews isolation transformed into a fellowship of divine peace; a real "taking of the manhood into God." The interpretation may not be right. So far as the Greek is pressed, and its secondary relation to the Aramaic-speaking ministry overlooked, so far it will be acknowledged that the meaning given to *παρεδόθη* is not quite natural. But the meaning obtained for the whole context is so "synoptical," so deep in its simplicity, that it becomes more and more convincing on the whole. It harmonizes in particular with one very noticeable part of our Lord's character and action; that part which psychologists would call intuition, and which the Gospels describe as trusting the Father. This corresponds with that passive rôle of the Messiah which appears in the Jewish apocalypses. The correspondence, we may believe, is due not to chance or to our Lord's premeditated imitation, but to a true "inspiration" in the apocalypses. And it is worth remarking how this passivity or trust removes a difficulty which has been felt in the sketches of the ministry made by apocalyptic critics. Certain "expectations" have been described as "mistakes." But these are hardly the proper terms to use. To one whose motto was "I must,"¹ who

¹ "You will notice," the late Bishop of S. Albans used to say, "how often in the Gospel our Lord says 'I must.'" He would add that when S. Paul on the road to Damascus asked, "What shall I do, Lord?" the answer was, "Go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (cf. Acts xxii. 10, ix. 6). If Dr. Festing saw this note he would wish it added that he said he learned this from the present Bishop of Gloucester.

waited for His "hour," to whom all things were delivered by the Father, to do or bear as the season came, and who took "no thought for the morrow," there could be neither expectation nor mistake in the path of duty; the agony in Gethsemane shewed less the shrinking of the flesh than the effort of the Son to hear the next direction plainly—"being Son, He learned obedience through suffering." That would be the course of duty. So far as He was a teacher as well as the destined Redeemer it might be rather different. Life may be reached by intuition, but a logical exercise of reason is the only method of teaching. Because our Lord obeyed as a mystic, He would not therefore refuse to think reasonably. If we follow the exact lead of this or that critic, it may seem impossible that He who "expected" the Kingdom to come at latest when He died should have also foreseen the fall of Jerusalem. If we read our documents as a whole we get at least a general impression that He did foresee the fall of Jerusalem. About the expectation of the coming of the Kingdom they give, in fact, far less clear information—"But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

The problem is superfluous. In the mystical process of redemption through obedience there was no "expectation" but an always present intuition of the Father's will. The foreseeing of the fall of Jerusalem on the other hand was but a part of the common-sense of all shrewd observers of those times.

Such interplay of logic with intuition must appear wherever the conditions of human activity operate. In the Apocalypse of S. John there seems to be an

expectation of the end repeatedly expressed, repeatedly disappointed. That seeming is due to the necessities of composition; a book, however apocalyptic, must have some logical arrangement. The ultimate reality of all apocalypse is timeless. In S. Lk. xxi. 14, we read, "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand how to answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom." Here we see the combination of deliberate purpose, "Settle it in your hearts" (which is, perhaps, due to the reflective experience of S. Lk., cf. S. Mt. x. 19), with the intuitional rule. This intuitional rule seems to cover more and more of the New Testament the more simply we take its narrative. Was S. Paul's appeal to Caesar a piece of prudence on a lower level than his Masters' passivity, or was it simple obedience to the divine impulse of the moment? In the very composition of the books of the New Testament, in the heightening or eliminating of the miraculous, the interpretation of the original apocalyptic in new terms, was not the guidance of the Spirit a more literal fact than our analysis allows? That guidance seems the more absolute just because it has not always produced the kind of truth we have fancied should be the most essential.

Such intuition is far beyond ordinary experience, but we can understand how the limitations of Galilean Judaism made it, so to speak, more natural to our Lord than it would be in England now. Throughout the Gospel limitation means possibility. "Therefore, he saith, when he entereth into the ordered world: sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, and a body didst thou fit for my purposes. In burnt-offerings and sin-offerings

thou hadst no pleasure. Then said I, 'Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God.'" "And," adds our author, "we too have been sanctified in that will through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." It is but a matter of literary interest that "body" here comes only from the Septuagint version and not from the Hebrew original. The author is not seeking Old Testament authority, but a form of words which shall be well known and fit to express the purpose of the Saviour's life on earth. His use of "body" in xiii. 3, "Remember those in evil case, as being yourselves also in the body, bound in the toils of this earthly state,"—shews the sense in which he regards this offering of the Lord's body here. It was a sanctification, a consecration, of the limitations of His manhood. He may have shared the strange, narrowly-bounded conception of His place and day about the coming of the Kingdom of God. When once we have recognized the probability of that we need spend little more time upon it, except as critical historians. As theologians, *i.e.* as sinful men anxious about the reality of Christ's salvation, the important thing for us to believe is that He created from this material an invincible purpose of love, "love without end and without measure grace." Crucifixion was a horrible punishment quite commonly borne by compulsion by criminals and sometimes by miserably ill-used men. Unless we reinforce our familiarity with ornamental crosses and our conventional language by setting a real crucifixion before the eyes of historical imagination, we cannot understand what the Lord did for us. But having done so, the great thing to recognize is that He came to His Cross of His own

free will; and that out of this pain and shame He created an unexampled act of heroism. Really unexampled because of those very limitations out of which it sprang. No one else has ever chosen to die because he believed himself to be the Christ of prophecy, and that his dying would bring salvation in the highest prophetic and spiritual sense to his brethren. And really creative in the fullest sense, for no one has ever made his choice, devised his plan, with so absolutely a free will; for our Lord's will was free as being no longer His own private will, but His will lost and found in the Father's will. He chose perfectly because He of himself did not choose at all, but "learning obedience" simply accepted the will of the Father. And here again, the perfection of the act was not original in the vulgar sense, for this obedience was part of the traditional rôle of the Christ. Yet in our Lord's handling of it it was not mere passivity; He took the traditional line of passive obedience and made it active in hitherto inconceivable intensity, transcending the old form with His love. Dr. Bigg writes of S. Augustine: "Augustine is commonly spoken of as a Predestinarian. But those who read the *Confessions* will see that what he means by predestination is not the *fiat* of an arbitrary will, but the attraction of one personality for another. Why do we love anybody? Those who can explain this can solve the problem of free will." His words help us to go a little deeper here. For we are concerned here too with this "predestination." It is not only our Lord's heroism and our Lord's faith that are before us. We too believe what He believed; that He was the Christ, and that the Father was guiding Him, and

had His inconceivably great purpose in so guiding Him. That we believe though we cannot prove it. On the other hand we can see our Lord, if we trust our records, answering to this inheritance of Christhood and to this guiding in a remarkable way. The inheritance and the guiding manifest themselves in what we call circumstances, and circumstances are just the limitations of real life on earth. He used these circumstances in a manner that transformed them, that created something new out of them, though of course seen from the other side this new thing is the purpose of the Father, there from the beginning and inevitable. A hopeless paradox, yet perfectly acceptable to those who believe that God is the God of the living, and that it is only persons who live, and those only live who love.¹

The narrow range of the Galilean ministry, the strangeness of the Lord's Messianic hope, the scandal of the Cross in whatever form it shapes itself to successive generations, as they press to more accurate apprehension of the days of His flesh, remain the material upon which His creative power works. It is always that creative yet predestined power which makes the glory of His life, and this is apprehended less by intellect than love—though "love" itself must be understood in

¹ Cf. Von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, ii. p. 131: "There are the two currents. The one tends so to emphasize the sense and reality of the soul's simple receptivity, and of what the soul receives at such, apparently, purely receptive times, as to ignore, or even practically deny, the undeniable fact that this very receptivity is inevitably an act of its own. Its decisive terms are Passivity, Fixedness, Oneness. The other current realizes that Grace does not destroy, violate, or supplant Nature, either entirely or in part, but that it awakens, purifies, and completes it, so that every divine influx is also ever a stimulation of all the good and true energy already, even though latently, present in the soul. And its characteristic terms are 'Action' (as distinguished from 'Activity'), Growth, Harmony."

no attenuated sense; it is the "charity" of the New Testament, and it includes (according to men's opportunity) that disciplined observance of other men and of discovered laws which the Old Testament terms "wisdom." This creative power is expressed by a phrase in ch. ix., "the Christ who offered himself without spot to God through eternal Spirit." These two words would not have their full significance if the apostolic doctrine of the Holy Spirit did not lie behind them. Yet they are not a simple allusion to that doctrine. They define it for a special emphasis. They make us think first of the spirit of Christship in like manner as we speak of the spirit of statesmanship or scholarship. Then they remind us that this spirit is an eternal potency in man which raises him above the fleeting shows and hindrance of this imperfect life. Finally, they tell us that this is no fancied endowment, but springs from the interaction of God's Holy Spirit with man's own particular spirit. Comparing meaner things with this supreme one, we might say that Shakespeare by eternal spirit created his poetry out of the raw material of other men's plays, within the very limited conditions of the Elizabethan stage. These obligations to predecessors, these limitations, surprise us as we gradually discover how large they were. But the creative act by eternal spirit remains the same, or rather becomes more wonderful when we perceive the definite lines within which he created so new a life.¹

¹ Cf. A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, pp. 23, 24. It is necessary to recognize the actual, necessitated touch on contemporary fact from which our Lord's apocalyptic starts. But it is even more necessary, after doing so, to breathe the larger spirit in which He created His own ever-growing apocalyptic. The Apocalypse of S. John in the New Testament supplies, perhaps, a more suitable parallel than those given above. A true instinct

This is indeed a comparison of the small with the very great. Yet it is not irreverent, for it may perhaps help us to remember an important truth about our Lord's work of salvation—a truth which runs all through the New Testament, is insisted on in this Epistle, and is necessary for a real belief in our Lord's Godhead. It is the truth that, as He was man on earth, so He is still man in heaven; that as He was made like in all points except sin to His brethren on earth, so He is one with them in heaven; that He is not God as being separated, cut off from mankind, but as having taken up manhood into God, as being really the mediator between God and men, as having made the unity of God with men an effective unity. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not a formal doctrine; it is not altogether beyond the range of man's intellect; if not simple to the intellect, it is at least a beautiful and simple answer to the yearning of man's heart for holiness; for it tells him that because he is "a member of Christ" his true self is already part of God. This is the apostolic doctrine which the Dean of Wells brought out so clearly from the Epistle to the Ephesians. It has been preserved by the Roman Church in a vivid if to us a strange manner in their cultus of the saints; our English doctrine of the

led Dr. Swete to pass lightly over Archbishop Benson's *Apocalypse* when he made his own commentary. Archbishop Benson has too much belittled the historical starting point of the Apocalypse. And yet his book is one of the greatest ever written on that vision. He grasps its real significance, its vitality. On p. 31 he has a paragraph which might stand as a figure of our Lord's relation to the apocalyptic theology of His day: "In the high heavens which the Seer enters by the door the central object is the interior of a Temple. The Temple is so unimportant in comparison with its Occupant that it is only touch by touch that it is perceived to have been there from the first. It is, so to speak, obscured by the glory of the Throne and of the Train which fills it."

communion of all saints in Christ preserves it, less boldly perhaps, but, if accepted as the Prayer Book presents it, not less safely; and indeed our Prayer Book brings it home to us even more closely by so clearly applying it to the saints we ourselves have known and to the imperfect saints. "All the company of heaven" is in Christ and therefore in God. Christ not only shared His manhood with us, but His Godhead means that in the deepening progress of His life He unites us to His whole self. As yet this unity is certainly imperfect; we still look forward to the end when God shall be all in all. But though it is impossible to relate by measurement the present union with the consummation, that logical difficulty does not forbid our sacramental apprehension of so great a truth. And notice above all that this is not a proud doctrine. It does not mean that man is equal to God, but that man is nothing independently of God. It does not tend to lower man's thought of God, but it does purify and raise man's hope of holiness; it explains the Lord's precept, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," and the baptismal motto of our Prayer Book, "Remembering always our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him."

This doctrine has been summed up in some famous words of S. Athanasius: "He became human that we may become divine" (*de Incarnatione*, liv). Newman, in *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, viii. 1., wrote: "the sanctification, or rather the deification, of the nature of man is one main subject of St. Athanasius' theology." Just before, in the same section, he had remarked, what

is of interest in the study of this Epistle, how the Apollinarian and Monophysite controversy "had the immediate effect of interpreting of His manhood texts which had hitherto been understood more commonly of His Divine Sonship . . . and in this way the doctrine of His subordination to the Eternal Father, which formed so prominent a feature in ante-Nicene theology, comparatively fell into the shade."

To Newman himself the Athanasian point of view was the satisfying one. "We speak of Him in a vague way as God, which is true, but not the whole truth; and, in consequence, when we proceed to consider His humiliation, we are unable to carry on the notion of His personality from heaven to earth. He who was but now spoken of as God, without mention of the Father from whom He is, is next described as a creature; but how do these distinct notions of Him hold together in our minds? We are able to continue the idea of a Son into that of a servant, though the descent was infinite, and, to our reason, incomprehensible; but when we merely speak first of God, then of man, we seem to change the Nature without preserving the Person. In truth, His Divine Sonship is that portion of the sacred doctrine in which the mind is providentially intended to rest throughout, and so to preserve for us His identity unbroken" (*Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. III., xii). The text of this sermon is Heb. v. 7, 8, and so keen is Newman's insight into this Epistle that a series of passages gathered from his sermons would make a fine commentary upon it. Yet it seems that after the introductory verses the author himself contemplates the divine Son steadily from the point of view of earth, not as Newman finds possible

immediately, but always through the manhood. "Beyond the assumption of the pre-existence of the Son," wrote Dr. Davidson on i. 2, "the Epistle seems nowhere to desert the region of history."

Ménégoz, taking a point of view more like Newman's, finds it impossible to recognize any confession of the essential divinity of Christ in the Epistle. "The Christology of our author is manifestly the essay of a Philonian Christian seeking to render account, with his philosophical premisses, of the mysterious personality of the Christ. His notion is sensibly different from that of the later orthodoxy. It approaches the doctrine of the Arians rather than that of Athanasius. It was bound to disappear from the Church with the belief in aeons, and to give place to the teaching of the essential divinity of the Christ. It was soon understood no longer; it was interpreted in the orthodox sense; and in our days there are still theologians who understand it in the sense of the Christology of the council of Nicaea. That is an optical illusion" (*La théologie de l'Épître aux Hébreux*, pp. 100, 101). Quite opposed though the Epistle is to anything like the demigod of Arianism, it is not difficult to see how Ménégoz was led to the opinion which he thus loosely expresses. But the sacramental interpretation of the manhood, suggested by Bruce's view of the glory being in not after the humiliation, and reinforced by the apocalyptic criticism of the last few years, seems to bring all parts of the Epistle into due relationship and proportion. This is the explanation of the Epistle which was anticipated by Nestorius, and has been defended by Professor Bethune Baker. "It is the human nature which qualifies our Lord to act as our highpriest; it is the

human nature, perfected through temptations and suffering, perfectly obedient to the Father's will, and sinless through them all, that constitutes the offering. Is it dividing the natures to say with Nestorius that it is not of God the Word that these things are said? Must not some such distinction be made, if we are to attempt to embody in accurate doctrine the profoundly edifying and ennobling conception of the highpriesthood of our Lord—a distinction which we may feel to be logical rather than real, but one that is forced upon us by the conditions under which we think and express our thought?" (*Nestorius*, pp. 116, 117). This defence has been criticised by Dr. Loofs in some lectures (not yet published) which he gave in the University of London during the Lent term, 1913. But if Dr. Loofs corrects a detail in Professor Bethune Baker's defence, he confirms its broader justice. When Cyril's interpretation finally triumphed, he says, Nestorius was necessarily confessed heretical; for Cyril's interpretation was irreconcilable with his, if accepted exclusively. Yet Nestorius was orthodox till that exclusion was ratified. He represents one line of early tradition which was preserved in the Western Church even by Leo. This line of tradition did not sharply divide "inspiration" from "incarnation." It springs from the New Testament, and must be reckoned with in all logical thinking upon the Person of Christ. That is Dr. Loofs' view, and it seems to follow that Nestorius' comments upon Hebrews are of orthodox value in one very real sense. It is not (as Ménégosz supposed) Athanasius and Nicaea, but Cyril and the later Greek theology, which present a difficulty to the student of this Epistle.

But this is a digression from which we must now return. The comparison with Shakespeare helps us to remember the unbroken connexion of our Lord with men, a connexion made still more effectual by His exaltation and Godhead. Yet it is a true instinct which makes us shrink from such comparisons. All works of men, so far as they are right works, do touch that supreme work of manhood and Godhead, yet with a difference so great that we cannot measure it. And this is not because such works are works of art or intellect, while our Lord's was a work of more sublime quality. Nothing that we have observed in the limitations to which He submitted suggests that we should make little of His intellectual power. Intellectual power is not estimated by the amount of information on which it is exercised. Most men now know more things than Plato knew. And we should feel it almost irreverent to call our Lord learned. Yet the impression left upon a reader of the Synoptic Gospels is that he has been in the presence of the most commanding intellect, and all the more commanding for its simplicity. It would also be his impression that the life he had been studying was the truest work of art the world has ever seen. It is perhaps part of the witness to the fidelity of the synoptic narrative that this impression of intellect and art is less distinctly made by the Johannine Gospel; the author there contributed more, the Lord himself less.

The point on which our author insists as marking the difference between our Lord's work and all others is His sinlessness. In the last passage we have referred to this is expressed by a sacrificial term, "without blemish." The immediate context explains the choice. In other

places the idea is expressed quite directly: "One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (iv. 15); "Such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners" (vii. 26). But the sacrificial term is especially useful to start from in a consideration of this doctrine of the Lord's sinlessness, for it points to the preparation for the doctrine. As from the Levitical ritual, with its rule of perfect soundness in the victim, so from Psalms, Prophets, and apocalyptic writings, a series of passages might be gathered which point to innocence, justice, righteousness, in the persons whom they celebrate. This innocence, justice, righteousness, hardly ever seems to mean anything so beautiful and perfect as the sinlessness which the tradition assigns to our Lord. The sense is as a rule more ordinary; a king is promised who will be juster than other kings; a psalmist asserts his innocence of sins which are laid to his charge, or that he has done nothing to deserve the troubles that are fallen upon him. Yet the accumulated language of such passages would tend to mould the conventional portrait of the expected Christ; His sinlessness would be part of His destined career. So then on the first closer look we take at this tradition, the claim seems to be slipping away into something not very wonderful after all. Men said the Christ would be very righteous; therefore Christians have said their Lord was sinless. That is because we have not yet looked close enough. Is not the history, the life of this doctrine parallel with that of the doctrine of the Cross? Why should we believe that salvation was wrought by our Lord's dying on the Cross? If we start from our modern ideas and interpretations we never

reach a clear answer. We are obliged to start from the other side, from the expectation which had been prepared by literature, or by the early, sometimes even crude, hopes that had grown round the idea of the Christ in the century or two before our Lord's birth. No doubt the death of the Christ had not been the precise form in which these hopes had shaped themselves; that particular act may have sprung from our Lord's own creative handling of the convention; yet even that we do not absolutely know. But we do know that a belief, strange to us but natural to those ages of more direct, less mediated, trust in God, had been formed, that God would—not by teaching, example, or a process of gradual improvement of mankind, but by a single, astonishing act, bring in His Kingdom. From that belief all the rest has naturally followed; the Lord's choice and heroic act, the Apostles' preaching, the Church's continual proving of the efficacy of what her Lord had wrought. Leave out that preparatory belief, as we have sometimes tried to do, and all becomes dim and vague; the Christian faith is no longer a centre round which all true faith among men may gather and consolidate and grow, but it becomes itself one of many faiths which have no centre more defined than Theism. So is it with the fundamental doctrine of the Cross. So is it also with this ancillary doctrine of the Lord's sinlessness. But for that preparation we should still miss the full significance of the doctrine. Yet the preparation affects in no wise the reality of our Lord's creative act of sinless life. Nor is the preparation our evidence for the truth of the Christian tradition of His sinlessness. That evidence is found first in the synoptic narrative, where it is quite

evident that there is no studied purpose to display our Lord as sinless; the sinlessness appears as though here at any rate there was no presupposition about it. Indeed the "guileless, undefiled" of our Epistle would seem faint in comparison with the active holiness of the Gospel, if it were not that "holy" is also part of the description, and if the negative presentment were not due to the author's insistence on the reality of the temptation—the Lord is to him "tried in all points like as we are, yet without sin." Still the synoptic picture is richer; and its touches are as subtle as the whole effect is simple. Take this one touch: the tenderness with which our Lord treats every sin except cruel self-righteousness; how little He talks about sin, how cautious He seems of extracting confession; how calmly He waits for God's own appointed time instead of pressing the conversion of this man or that; in what an indescribable harmony He joins His own absolute consciousness of rectitude with a pity that claims no superiority—a harmony which would be impossible in any sin-stained mind.¹

That first for evidence. Then the tradition as it appears in such an early document as this Epistle, and then the building up and continual refashioning of the Church's ideal memory, which is saved from becoming fanciful by the repeated correction it undergoes in criticism and experience. And this correction is always made in the end by reference to the early, simple record. If any novel scheme of ethics has ever been proposed, it has always proved, sooner or later, to be partly a recovery of something in our Lord's principle which has

¹ Cf. Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, art. "Sin," by Canon Bernard.

been forgotten, partly to need correction itself from His principle. Is it too bold to foretell that it will be so with the criticism of the doctrine of self-sacrifice which is current to-day, and that with all such novelties in the future it will still be so? It might be bold to prophesy that all future theology will be corrected by the standard of our present creeds, or even that future creeds will always be so scriptural as future ethics; but in the ethics of the Gospel there can be found nothing to leave out. The title *Interimsethik* designates a difficult ideal, not an inadequate ideal, not even a *sermo ininterpretabilis*.

It is in this sinlessness then, as our author suggests, that the Godhead of our Saviour shews visibly in His manhood. In this sinlessness we see Him, as it were, transfigured. Or, it might be said, this sinlessness is our author's evidential miracle. That is of some importance. Miracles certainly have been considered at most periods in the Church's history to be of evidential value. Just now our somewhat increased knowledge of natural law and of the habits of historians has made it difficult for us to use miracles as evidence. To most they are a difficulty; to some mere lumber. No doubt the last word about miracles is far from having been said. But it is noticeable that there is almost nothing about miracles, in the common acceptance of that term, in this Epistle. God has borne witness to the word of salvation, we read in ch. ii., by signs and wonders and various powers and by impartings of Holy Spirit according to His will. This is conventional language borrowed from the Old Testament to express the whole wonderful course of the Gospel; the kind of phrase which a person

might use who felt it wise to be reticent about miracles, in part the very phrase which was used by the author of Deuteronomy when he made his grave selection from the more childlike narrative of Exodus. In ch. xi. some miracles from the Old Testament are alluded to, but briefly, and again in borrowed language. The Lord's Resurrection and Ascension are the very foundation of the whole Epistle, but there is not a word about those points in the Gospel narrative which provoke modern controversy. And for the purposes of his sacramental picture, the author has not hesitated to foreshorten the sequence of the manifestations, so that the death on the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Ascension appear as momentary and simultaneous. This affords no argument for or against the accuracy of the narratives. It does not justify controversy about them. It does confirm the honesty of perplexed churchmen, even priests, who feel that there may be questions open, or likely to be opened presently, concerning which it is right to keep silence until further knowledge shall make a larger answer possible. But the interesting thing for students of this Epistle is its insistence on this one miracle, the miracle of our Lord's sinlessness.

Controversy makes attackers simple and apologists subtle in definitions. There can be no doubt that it is extremely difficult to define a miracle, so difficult that it would be foolish to attempt a new definition and almost useless to quote an old one.¹ But this is plain, that so far as the lives of men have been observed

¹ The best I know is one given by Dr. Headlam at the Church Congress in October 1912: "A miracle means really a supremacy of the spiritual force of the world to an extraordinarily marked degree over the mere material."

hitherto sinlessness does transcend the law of nature. On the other hand, though there is difficulty in proving the other Gospel miracles which transcend all known laws of nature, whether with regard to strict evidence or with regard to vaguer prejudice, there is no good reason at all for rejecting the evidence for our Lord's sinlessness, and there seems to be nothing in the constitution of men's minds to give rise to prejudice against it. On the contrary, the word ἔπρεπεν—"for such a Highpriest even became us (καὶ ἔπρεπεν), holy, guileless, undefiled"—rings true to all Christian ears; such sinlessness was proper in the divine Saviour; we could not conceive of Him otherwise.¹

And yet this language about transcending laws of nature is surely out of place. We do not know those laws, and the more we do learn of them and the Saviour's life the closer they appear to come together. What is remarkable is the manner in which this author appears to link the Lord's sinlessness with the lot and even with the nature of ordinary men. "Tried in all points like as we are, yet—in this alone different—without sin." He seems to anticipate the exception which a timid convention will afterwards make. "He hath not need, day after day as the highpriests, first for His own sins to offer sacrifice, then for those of the

¹ It might almost be said that the practical line of division is thus drawn between the "lowest" Christian and the "highest" Jewish doctrine of Jesus Christ. Mr. Montefiore comments thus on S. Mk. x. 18 ("Why callest thou me good?"): "It is a noble character that peeps through the fragmentary and one-sided records—none the less noble because we may be sure that of Jesus, both in the fact and in his own estimate of himself, the adage was true: 'there is no man that sinneth not'" (*The Synoptic Gospels*, i. 247). There seems no difficulty in the saying itself. It is in harmony with our Lord's habitual reverence, but implies no consciousness of sin in Him.

people. For this He did once for all when He offered himself." Surely the important contrast here is between "day after day" and "once for all," not between "His own" and "those of the people." When we say He took our sins upon Him, we mean something real not figurative. "I do not know," writes Dr. Du Bose, "how better to express the truth of the matter than to say, in what seems to me to be the explicit teaching of our Epistle, and of the New Testament generally, that our Lord's whole relation to sin in our behalf was identical with our own up to the point of His unique and exceptional personal action with reference to it. Left to our nature and ourselves it overcomes and slays all us; through God in Him He overcame and slew it. He did it not by His own will and power as man, but as man through an absolute dependence upon God. And He made both the omnipotent grace of God upon which He depended, and His own absolute dependence upon it, His perfect faith, available for us in our salvation. He re-enacts in us the victory over sin and death which was first enacted in Himself" (*High Priesthood and Sacrifice*, p. 201). And again, "It is not to be supposed that our Lord had not that which was to be put off in the flesh, as well as needed or was in want of that which was to be put on in the spirit" (*The Reason of Life*, p. 160).

There then is the link on the one side. The Lord's struggle against sin was quite the same, up to the point of victory, as ours. No later drawn-up scheme of original sin, or anything else, must be allowed to obscure that truth. In His temptation the divine Saviour is really united with the men who through

bonds of heredity, environment, tradition, have been most sorely tried.

Then there is the link on the other side, the side of victory. There are signs of such a link in most of the Epistles, for these writers do claim sinlessness in those who have put on Christ. "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not" (1 Joh. v. 18). This is a typical sentence, and it harmonizes with an impression which the Acts and Epistles make upon us, that most of those who entered the Church at that period went through a marked conversion in which they visibly became new men. "Saved" in the New Testament means what the mission preacher means by that word rather than what the Catechism suggests by "being brought into this state of salvation." Then as now conversion had its varieties. Besides that very personal change from which S. Paul's larger activity of holiness started, there was the more social change which S. John expresses—"We know we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." But whatever its varieties, there it is, cutting deep characters in the pages of the New Testament, and certainly a natural sequel to our Lord's call to repent because the kingdom of God was at hand. And in the sign and wonder of such conversion there is a link, if frail and insecure, between sinlessness gained by the Lord in himself and sinlessness imparted by Him to men.

Yet that link by itself is frail. For other passages shew a different feeling, and nowhere more remarkably than in S. John who writes so boldly on Christian sinless-

ness, and draws so dark a line between the family of Christ and the hostile world. We think of "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," and still more of that most tender passage, "Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him whereinsoever our heart condemn us; because God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1 Joh. iii. 19 f.). And we know that among those whom S. Paul addressed as "saints" there were some whom he rebuked for serious sins.

A developement may be traced in the apostolic attitude to the sins of Christians.

S. Paul sets the ideal as high as it possibly can be conceived; he also exercises discipline in some cases of grave sin, and he urges his converts in a very practical manner to break off their bad habits. There is a contradiction between this assumed ideal and this practical recognition, but he does not formally notice it. The explanation lies in his forward-looking, apocalyptic spirit. His ideal is an anticipatory ideal, and his concern is with the vital process of achievement, not with scholastic adjustments of facts to theory, or with the arrangement, as in a code, of laws of discipline. His ideal is mainly used as the living source of peace and power; "Brethren, we are debtors, therefore, etc."

The author of Hebrews is writing to his own particular friends who have a particular duty to do. He represents the ideal as set before them, as ready to be realized at once if they will make the corresponding effort. If they will not, the circumstances are such that they will be traitors to their Lord, and by their own choice will be putting away from them the whole Chris-

tian belief in forgiveness and renewal. No general law is laid down, no theory of sin or forgiveness is opened. Partly circumstances, partly the cast of his own and still more of his friends' mind, prevented the author from using S. Paul's appeal to the converted heart. The ideal stands over against his readers' lives; the anticipatory victory through the Spirit is hardly noticed.

In the first Epistle of S. John we have reached a period when "conversion" is no longer the all but universal experience. The early ideal of Christian sinlessness is in danger of becoming a conventional claim. The Apostle checks the "lawlessness" of some who "have tended to deny that the peccadilloes of Christians were sins." His apostolic greatness is seen in this; he keeps the ideal as high as ever, and shews that the sincere churchman will never be satisfied with any lower standard, and, what is remarkable, he insists that true Christianity realizes the ideal. On the other hand, he recognizes the fact of sins and—what is no less remarkable—says that the claim to be sinless is an untruth. Like S. Paul with his contradiction, so S. John leaves this contradiction unexplained; such explanations would neither be possible nor profitable. What is possible and profitable he shews; that Christians should bear one another's sins and pray for one another's forgiveness. He comes nearer than S. Paul both to a rule and to a theory, but is still in the apostolic stage of practical developement, not formulated discipline. "There is a sin unto death; not concerning this do I say that he should make request"; only by reading later discipline into this brief sentence can we make it either a dogma or a definite rule. It is a sincere man's recognition of reality;

prayer may not be enjoined when it would be obviously unreal.¹

In the apostolic age the sins of the brethren were regarded as violations of the Christian life, as being in fact so far from "natural," that they were contradictions of the law of regenerated nature. In Holy Scripture the ideal is the law. That is the truth which the apocalyptic movement—so important because it is chiefly a moral movement—is recovering. As time went on discipline was organized. Necessary though that was it weakened faith in the ideal. In these later days the interplay of civilization with Christian charity has brought it about that idealism in politics, economics, almost in personal morality, is mistrusted. But in the New Testament, and if the progressive enlightenment of conscience be allowed for, in the Old Testament also, the only morality recognized is absolute, ideal morality. Holy Scripture is the history of men who aimed at that ideal. There were none but fell short in some way or at some time except One. And because that One was always firm to the ideal, His disciples recognized Him as the light that lighteth every man, the source and sustainer of their very life.

In that unflinching venture of His towards the ideal we understand our Lord's sinlessness aright. It was no mere abstinence from sin. It was, as this Epistle recognizes, a continual pressing forward to perfection. And from that divine example we learn how we should judge of man's loyalty to it and of his participation in the

¹ See Brooke, *International Critical Commentary* on 1 Joh. ii. 1, and Burkitt's review of this commentary in the *Cambridge Review*, Nov. 14, 1912. I do not feel able to accept Dr. Burkitt's summary of the doctrine in Hebrews—"The author of Hebrews will allow no forgiveness for Christian sinners."

regenerated life. Holy Scripture does not say that men cannot become sinless. Sin, as Dr. Tennant reiterates, would not be sin if it were inevitable.¹ Scripture does say that there is no man who has not sinned, and whether or no such language is to be understood as definite theological statement, the "stupendous difficulty" of passing a whole life without sin is obvious, as is the exceeding misery which our sins are still causing in this present world.

But to ask whether any one man can possibly pass through his whole life on earth without sin is not the practical question. It is a question which obscures the ideal aim, and therefore obscures our relationship to the Lord. In the interpretation of that relationship the sign and wonder of conversion itself does not carry us so very far. No doubt that was never the only way of entrance, and the solid phalanx of the apostolic Church moved behind the splendid fires which dazzle us at first. The abiding link between the Lord's sinlessness in himself and His sinlessness imparted to men is better perceived in such a passage as Rom. vi. 1-11, where S. Paul gives his doctrine of Baptism as the anticipation of the new creation. It is the assurance of realization in the appointed season, and of that freedom from the bonds of the "inevitable" which the Lord's victory has given men. The humility of the true saint's hope is as evident in the New Testament as in later times. His own failure has always been more evident to him than the success which nevertheless he does perceive in many others. But his failure is failure, not hostility to God, and much of the failure itself is conditioned by the lengthening series of

¹ See *The Concept of Sin*, *passim*, and especially the note on p. 260, in which he refers to his former book, *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*.

partial victories. [So long as the fight is strenuously fought, conscience becomes clearer and demands more.

The saint learns obedience through failures. The Lord learned only by the things that He suffered. Yet the parallel is a real one. In Heb. vii. 26, "separated from sinners" is joined immediately with "made higher than the heavens." In Heb. ix. 28, it is when the Christ shall be seen a second time that He shall be, in this full sense, "apart from sin." Even in the Lord there could be no absolute freedom from sin in the days of the flesh.¹ The final victory was not won till the final trial. He was not separate from sin and sinners till He had learned all His obedience and was made perfect through the suffering of death.

Of course we feel the difference. He was victorious at each point of the contest; He was stained by no memory of personal sin. If there were not this difference the likeness would be worthless. Yet the likeness is a likeness of promise. There is more than we can see. There is the Father's will working for us, as well as the Lord Jesus carrying out that will. There is not only the picture of the Lord Jesus as He lived long ago and gained victory over sin; there is also Jesus Christ ever living to make intercession for us. And above all, that life of intercession is only one aspect of what this Epistle calls His perfecting as Highpriest, and what we, less figuratively, call His Godhead. For though we have been considering His sinlessness as a special evidence for

¹ Not "separate from sinners" nor "apart from sin," yet sinless. The paradox is explained, and a hint is given of the possibility of its fuller application to mankind, in an aphorism of G. F. Watts: "Good and evil are interwoven, or even in spirals; nature does not tangle her work" (*Life and Writings*, iii. p. 297).

that Godhead, acceptable to modern, perplexed thought, we are to remember that this truth really rests for us, as it did for the author of the Epistle, on a tradition that goes back to the Galilean ministry, and beyond that into Judaism, till its sources are dispersed in the dim aspirations of remote antiquity—"as the clear and living brooks are to the obscure fountains whence they rise." It is only through His manhood that we know this Godhead. That does not diminish its glory for us; it increases it, for it shows it serviceable. It shows this Person as the only sinless man, but as such not in isolation but in communication. He is "separate from sinners," *i.e.* from those at any time who are not men of goodwill towards His holiness; with those who in spite of their present sin are fighting on His side He is one Christ, one with not apart from them. It is easy to say, "Not here and now, but some day, somewhere, men shall be sinless according to God's purpose in Christ," but as we say the words we feel that we are shelving the difficulty. The fallacy involved in them is apparent when we try to conceive that "sinless world," and realize that we can only describe it in a phrase which still further passes understanding—"that God may be all in all." But in that phrase S. Paul is still expressing a purpose an aim for effort. And his very syntax warns us that though a "some day, somewhere," may be easier, we express a truer thought when we say that the Lord's gift of forgiveness is indeed the gift of sinlessness also; but that it is the gift of His own life and therefore of His Godhead, and to think of this as a mere gift given is not to think at all. His Godhead is revealed to us in manhood striving against sin; our partaking of that Godhead

can only be when we too are striving against sin, and are therefore in a sinful world. This leaves much unexplained. May we not severally hope that here and now we may be sinless even as He was? We cannot conceive of such a hope without odious pride. If the world remain sinful how can God's will be achieved "that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth?" To that question too we can conceive no answer. There is something in these puzzles which runs out beyond our powers. But happily that something is hope. The hope seems "natural" to us; the sinless Highpriest "became us." This Epistle touches no promise of man's ever being separated here from the limitations of his natural intellect, or from suffering, but it does appear to put his purpose—if he will purpose it—of moral victory in a different line. Its doctrine of the Highpriest who partook of flesh and blood prepares for the hope which is epitomized in the Johannine record, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"—for we would fain believe that translation legitimate. Only that purpose must be held, as almost everything is presented in the apostolic interpretation of the Saviour's work, not by men severally each for himself, but by men together as one body in Christ. And it must be held with that humility and that reverence towards the Master as towards One who cannot be fully understood, which makes us recognize that our unity in Him depends upon His immeasurable superiority over us; if He is indeed "taking away the sin of the world," it is because He was alone on earth the sinless Rescuer of impotent men.

CHAPTER V

PRIESTHOOD AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK : THE PRIESTHOOD

Priesthood as analogy of Christ's redemptive work—Levitical priesthood the starting-point of the analogy, but not the type ; it had no principle of growth—But from the beginning of the world there has been a truly typical priesthood which has grown to its consummation in our Lord. This priesthood has been at work wherever influence was exercised "on the Godward side"—The Alexandrine title for this priesthood, "after the order of Melchizedek," might be translated into modern terms by "natural priesthood—It is to be seen in the world of nature, in history, especially in Israel's history—Since this priesthood reached its consummation in our Lord the priesthood of the whole Church has been endowed with fuller effectiveness as being part of His priesthood—The Epistle gives no *rationale* of ministry and sacraments. But its very real churchmanship appears in its main purpose, viz. to prepare the readers to brave the risk of martyrdom.

THE whole view of our Lord's work in the Epistle to the Hebrews is sacramental. Through the visible the inscrutable is revealed ; through the manhood, the God-head. And if nature here, as everywhere, "half reveals and half conceals," that makes the revelation only the more real since this way is natural and requires the mind and will of the recipient to co-operate with it. That salvation which began to be spoken through the Lord was confirmed in its course to us by those that heard him (ii. 3), we are partakers of the Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm to the end (iii. 14), our faith is the substance of things hoped for (xi. 1), and the

entrance into peace is our going forth to our Lord outside the camp (xiii. 13 f.). At every point man's answer joins God's purpose to make reality.

The whole view is sacramental, but the whole is concentrated upon a particular line. "Think of Christ as priest," says the author, "and I will make you understand." The Priesthood of Christ is the main theme of the Epistle.

It comes almost at once, like a *motif* in a piece of music. First, the Son is said to have made priestly purification of the sins that priests are busy with (i. 3), then comes an echo of the idea in i. 7, 14, where the angels are called sacerdotal ministers in the eternal Temple. Then at the end of ch. ii. the picture of divine and victorious humiliation is broken off with the phrase: "Whence it behoved him to be made in all things like to the brethren, that he might become pitiful and faithful as Highpriest on the Godward side for the propitiating the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered being tried in temptation, he is able to come to the rescue of those who are in trial." Why Highpriest? As yet the title is not explained; only our ears are prepared. Then section by section the letter takes up the same idea; the title is repeated; more and more is said about it; and at last in chs. vii. to x. the meaning is worked out.

If we ask why the author chose this particular analogy, various answers might be given, as for instance that Philo had called the Word of God a highpriest, and had elaborated the analogy; or that there is a great deal in the Old Testament about priests and priesthood, and the author knew the Old Testament remarkably well, and does in fact draw all his illustrations from it rather

than from the practice of the day; or there may have been at about that time a popular interest in a Levitical Messiah, and of this we have a certain amount of evidence in a lately published Jewish Apocryphon.¹ If literary antecedents are worth searching for anywhere, it might seem that they are specially useful in a study of this academic Epistle. Yet when we have an opportunity of comparing it with such antecedents, what strikes us most forcibly is the freedom of the author; he uses his predecessors to supply a language, a mould for his expression, but what he has to express is so independently his own. In this free manner he seems to use Philo and S. Paul and the Gospel tradition and even the Old Testament. So that after all it seems very possible that the simplicity of the early Church was right, and the simplicity of uninstructed readers in later times, who entitled the Epistle "To Hebrews," and supposed its form to have been suggested by the interest of the author and his friends in their ancestral Jewish ritual. That ritual is described in language taken from

¹ See Mr. G. Margoliouth's review of Schechter's *Documents of Jewish Sectaries*, in *Athenaeum*, Nov. 26, 1910, and his article in *JTS*, Ap. 1911. And now see Dr. Charles' *Fragments of a Zadokite Work*, Introduction, § 12: "The development actually realized and the tendencies in the process of evolution in these books find a not unnatural culmination in our author. The steady glorification of Levi in Sirach, Jubilees, and the Testaments had only served to reduce Judah to the second place of authority and honour in the nation, but not otherwise to depreciate that great tribe. In no case had this process degenerated into a hostile attack on Judah. And yet this and naught else could be the inevitable outcome of the tendencies which were actively at work in the second century before the Christian era. These tendencies came to a head in the Zadokite Fragments. Therein the glorification of the Zadokite priests is carried on *pari passu* with the disparagement of the Davidic family and claims and an attack on Judah." Heb. vii. 11-19 might be explained as, in part, a protest against these tendencies, but it would be a frigid explanation. Dr. Charles dates the Fragments between 18 B.C. and 70 A.D., probably between 18 B.C. and 8 B.C.

the Old Testament. It is certain that the author had read about the Tabernacle in Exodus; it is by no means certain that he had ever seen the Temple at Jerusalem. Yet the simplest explanation of his analogy remains this: that he and his friends had been brought up, wherever they were brought up, under the ordinances of the Levitical priesthood, that for some years they had still obeyed those ordinances, Christians though they had become, and that now at last they are preparing with deep regret to break away from them.

“Every highpriest being taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men on the Godward side, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins, being able to bear patiently with the ignorant and erring since he himself also is compassed with infirmity, and because of that infirmity he ought, as for the people so also for himself, to offer for sins” (v. 1-3). We think of the adaptation of this passage in the Greek Liturgies, *e.g.* S. Basil:—

“Thou, Lord, hast shewn to us this great mystery of salvation. Thou hast deemed us worthy, Thy humble and unworthy servants, to become ministers of Thy holy altar. Do Thou enable us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit for this service, that without condemnation standing before Thy holy glory we may offer to Thee sacrifice of praise. For Thou art He who worketh all things in all. Grant, Lord, that on behalf both of our sins and of the ignorances of the people, our sacrifice may become acceptable and well-pleasing in Thy sight.”

And it is difficult not to feel, and to suppose that the composer of that most priestly supplication felt also, that our author when he wrote was thinking of good

priests whom he had known, whose humility, sympathy, and single-heartedness had brought some measure at least of true salvation to himself and his brothers. He writes (himself an early type of unassuming modernist) as Fogazzaro wrote of Don Flores and the good priests he had revered in Italy. Of course this may be but his delicate, accomplished art; there is no way of proving it anything else. But come back to this passage, or to the beginning of ch. x., where the futility of the Levitical sacrifices is proved by their frequency and by their yearning outstretch after holiness; come back to such passages after patient study of the critical discussion of the Epistle, and listen how refreshingly they sound when the affections and relationships of real life are allowed to take their place behind them.

But however this may be; whether Temple or Tabernacle, books or everyday experience, started this analogy, there is the starting-point. The Levitical ritual as observed, written or practised, is the visible institution in this present world which the writer bids his friends contemplate; then from the contemplation to turn to their Lord. "Wherefore brethren of our communion of saints, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and Highpriest of our profession (our creed and ritual) Jesus." "Think of Him as a priest such as you know priests, and I will make you understand."¹

¹ Such interest in Levitical rites on the part of Christians has indeed very little parallel in the New Testament. S. Luke tells of disciples and Apostles going to the Temple; the Temple is the background of the opening chapters of his Gospel; our Lord frequented the Temple court in His last week at Jerusalem, and according to S. John at other times. But little interest is shewn in the Temple sacrifices. The Apostles went up to the Temple at the hour of prayer; our Lord quoted "My house shall be called a house of prayer." This only proves, what is everywhere evident, that this Epistle has

But he uses this Levitical priesthood and ritual just as he uses books. It provides him with a starting-point, and then with a grammar and vocabulary, by means of which he will express quite other ideas of his own. For in this Epistle the Levitical priesthood is never treated as a symbol or sacrament. It is a starting-point, it provides an analogy. If it were not for it there would be no calling Christ a priest at all. But except for this convenience in analogy, Christ's priesthood has nothing in common with the Levitical. The Levitical could never develop into His priesthood. What likeness it has to His is merely artificial. If there is death in both, in the one it is a willing act of love, in the other it is inflicted by man upon beasts in a kind of masque or make-believe. If blood is offered in both, one is the life of the Lord of creation offered by himself, the other offerings are of the blood of beasts, shed without their consent for a kind of fictional connexion with the shedder. "The *idea is* that the covenant does not bind while the covenanter still lives." Certainly the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin. It is hard to suppose that any thoughtful Jew believed it did, or that the Old Testament was meant to say it did. The question was, could any blood do so? A prophet (Is. liii.) had thought long ago that a man's blood sometimes might. Our author was convinced that now in the very fullest sense such blood had done so—"the blood of the Christ shall purge your consciences from

a peculiar place among the books of the New Testament ; in this respect the Apocalypse of S. John comes nearest to it. Father Tyrrell (*Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 33), was too imaginative when he wrote, "Christ and His Apostles, Jews as they were, and lovers of the Temple with its soul-stirring symbolism."

dead works to serve the living God." Here is reality—as he would say "eternity," there was imitation merely. The one does not touch the other. There is fancy in the Levitical fiction, like "pansies for thoughts," but no sacrament.

That does not mean that the worshippers who used those strange imitations never touched eternity. "Else would they have ceased to be offered because of the worshippers having no longer any consciousness of sin," being not "purified" but dulled and insincere. In the ceremonies themselves there was "remembrance of sins." And in the sorrow and yearning and brave endeavour and onward-pressing faith of simple Israelites, and in the sympathy and diligence of their priests, there was a very real partaking of the Christ, a real dependence on His eternal priesthood. "These all had witness borne to them through their faith though they did not carry home the harvest of the promise, God having provided a better thing concerning us, that not without us they should be perfected" (xi. 39, 40).

"A better thing"; for there was a difference. Coleridge puts it well in *Aids to Reflection* (Introd. Aphorisms xxiii.): "The outward service of ancient religion, the rites, ceremonies, and ceremonial vestments of the old law, had morality for their substance. They were the letter, of which morality was the spirit; the enigma, of which morality was the meaning. But morality itself is the service and ceremonial of the Christian religion." And to the writer of this Epistle the Christian was a continuous whole with the Jewish religion, but not with the Levitical sacrifices. They were a shadow, not the *icon*, type, sacrament, of realities. They

were ordinances of flesh imposed until a season of reformation. They belonged to an order of things that was wearing out and nigh unto passing away (viii. 13, ix. 10, x. 1). They were "things made," mechanical contrivances, which were to be shaken and removed so that the realities which are not shaken might abide (xii. 27).

And as the ritual acts so the arranged order. The Levitical priesthood was carried on by succession of physical descent. Because a man was born of the tribe of Levi or the family of Aaron, he might very likely grow up under influences which would fit him to be a good priest. Such influences are spiritual things most plainly manifested in affection, authority, example, and all like self-sacrificing motions of men's hearts. So far again the Levitical priesthood did touch the eternal priesthood. But in like manner there is a spiritual training for all good services in the societies of men, and sometimes it has seemed as though it went on better for the succession not being hereditary by physical law. It certainly appears that every now and then such physical law becomes "old and wearing out and nigh to vanishing away," and, on the whole, the "seasons of reformation" have justified their claim. The break has been sharp, and romantic regrets last long, and often the noblest hearts have been on the side of the old order, learning one way or another obedience by suffering. The change has always been, as in the days when this letter was written, a "shaking not only of the earth but also of the heaven," and sometimes mistakes have been made. The test in those crises has been whether indeed a power of endless life has taken the place of a law of fleshly ordinance, And to return to the burning

question of that day, there can be no denial that the mere physical succession of the tribe of Levi, stripped of its spiritual associations, perhaps sometimes clogged with evil associations, was mechanical not eternal in character.

And therefore the author sternly sets all this priesthood of Levi or Aaron aside. It is a shadow not a type. It may have been a useful law, but men have outgrown that law, and there is no principle of growth in it to fit it anew for growing times. Those who have read the Epistle with the thought of the Levitical priesthood being the "type," may be surprised when they turn back to it again to find how little after all is said about that priesthood. So little in comparison with the whole argument, and that little simply concerned to show that it was not a fruitful sacrament, but a mechanism now worn out and to be thrust aside. Like the angels in ch. i., so Levi and Aaron here are only mentioned that we may be told to pay ^(no) ~~(more)~~ attention to them. no

In strong contrast to this stands the treatment of that other priesthood which is the subject of the Epistle. There is hardly a paragraph without some allusion to it. In one place it is presented generally as a universal principle in the life of men (v. 1-4); in another a special example of it is chosen from ancient history (vii. 1-3). Again and again the need and yearning of men for such a priesthood is recognized.

There are hints even of its extension into the world of nature outside mankind (i. 2, 3, ii. 10), and always it is shewn to be leading up to and completed in the earthly life, the death, the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. This kind of priest is a real type of the Son of God (vii. 3), ordered in the course of divine and natural

law, with a kinship which promises at last unity and consummation. This priesthood is characterized by a true physical relationship to men (ii. 17), by pitifulness, faithfulness, sympathy, by being of divine appointment and involving the choice of one out of many who shall deal with the sins and weaknesses of the many and bring them near to God (v. 1); it propitiates sin, cleanses the conscience for service to God (ii. 17, ix. 14). The priest of this priesthood suffers, sheds His own blood, operates through His own will, but through His own will lost and found in the will of God (x. 9 f.);¹ that is, He obeys and therefore governs natural law, and is not bound by artificial rules. His whole work has to do with mind, will, affection; He offers prayers and tears, and one mode in which His priestly work is shared by men who come after Him is their almsgiving and praise (v. 7, xiii. 15 f.).

Yet that is but one, and a lighter mode. This priest suffers even to the death, and in a willing devotion to Him and with Him in life and death other men make His sacrifice their own. His will and their will, His affection, courage and theirs, are the ritual means. This priesthood is therefore according to the power of an end-

¹ Cf. Bethune Baker, *Nestorius*, p. 110: "There was wanted, as the means through which the promise should be realized, a highpriest—by birth a descendant of Abraham, by dignity higher than the prophets, sinless and gentle, capable of suffering, inasmuch as he was kith and kin with Abraham, but knowing how to cry to God in moments of peril 'Only not what *I* will, but *Thou*.'" These last words (from the analysis of Nestorius' sermon on the Highpriesthood of Christ) might be taken as a summary, or symbol, of the whole doctrine of the Epistle. The Lord's sinlessness, the author's practical apprehension of His Godhead, the sacrificial imagery and its inner meaning, the author's own peace, and the strength he desires for his friends, the aspiration in the types and the consummation of Priesthood, Christship, Sonship, in the Lord Jesus Christ—all this runs up into the transformed will of chap. x.

less life, not according to the law of a material ordinance. It has to do with eternal power, not with visible and perishing splendour. And the whole of this endless circle of priesthood has for its centre the unchanging Jesus Christ, in whose sinless achievement all that has been is completed and all that shall be is anticipated. This priesthood is one, not many; one since God's decree first stood, and till all expectancy shall be transformed into full salvation (i. 2, ix. 28). From the beginning of the world the whole priestly instinct of life¹ has been striving towards its perfect manifestation, throwing out partial manifestations, but less and less imperfect, as it moved onward. At last the steady onward movement was completed in the humility of the days of His flesh who had been the agent of that movement, "bearing the universe onward by the decree of God's power."

The universal priestly instinct was defined, carried to its utmost intensity, and made a historical achievement for the possession of mankind in the moment of His death on the Cross. That moment was significant as the consummation of the long life of obedience through suffering which the whole world had been always learning. He, by His being chosen, appointed, educated in a special place of eminence, had been fit to learn it in a special manner. He had so learned it, for He, however tempted, was yet without sin. That moment in history marked the consummation of the ages (ix. 26). It was (as the Lord had expected when "in great tumult at the third hour of that day he ascended the Cross") the "end

¹ Cf. Bergson, *L'évolution créatrice*, iii. p. 251: "Il n'est pas douteux que la vie, dans son ensemble, soit une évolution, c'est à dire, une transformation incessante. Mais la vie ne peut progresser que par l'intermédiaire des vivants, qui en sont dépositaires."

of the world." And so quite naturally this priesthood is recognized throughout the Epistle to be the priesthood of the king, and in ch. xii., "A kingdom that cannot be shaken" is substituted for the term priesthood. In that moment, in that one unrepeatable offering, the expected Kingdom of God came, the old order passed away. Henceforth men have but to take the kingdom, live in the indissoluble sacrificed life, be in their turn what their Lord has been before them; for the way of access to God has now once for all been opened. It is "a new and living way"; there has been much that was like this way before, but never itself; there will be much that falls short of it in future, but never for the same reason as before. Then it was the baffled striving of the imperfect type, now the hindrance is the weariness of those who forget. The way is open; the priest has brought the people near to God.

It is to be noticed how that expression of access to God punctuates the Epistle. It closes the introductory section, ch. iv.; the digression in ch. vi.; it comes just before the end of the second division, ch. x.; and in a slightly altered form it ends the whole argument in ch. xii. There is a twice-repeated phrase (ii. 17, v. 1) which has been well translated, "on the Godward side." That translation seems to sum up with excellent terseness the whole character of this real priesthood which the Epistle is engaged upon. Whenever any moving power has been found "on the Godward side" there has that priesthood been operating. The perfection of our Lord's power was just that; it was always and entirely and effectually on the Godward side.

But the difficulty in understanding the Epistle itself

arises so largely from the author having chosen to designate this priesthood by another term. He calls it priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek." It is not at first sight obvious why priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek" should be a truer thing than priesthood after the order of Levi or Aaron, and the single chapter (vii.) in which he essays to give a formal proof of the superiority of Melchizedek to Levi, and hence of the one order of priesthood to the other, is just the one part of the Epistle which seems least satisfactory to us. It is indeed more like the ingenuity of Philo than anything else in the Epistle, and if we are to make good use of it we have to remember how different are the forms of logical process in different ages, and how, in a document belonging to another period than our own, we must often break through the now inconclusive logic to reach the remarkable idea. And often this is the more necessary just in proportion as the idea is remarkable, because a commanding mind is apt to outrun its contemporaries in eccentricity, and so to cause more trouble to posterity than commonplace authors do. Think of Dante; the great idea of his *De Monarchia*; the extraordinary fashion of the argument which controls that idea. Another instance in the New Testament of like logical disguise is S. Paul's argument from the singular "seed," not "seeds" (Gal. iii. 16). Somewhat less dryly logical, yet still examples of a habit of thought alien to our minds are many of the other quotations in the New Testament from the Old Testament. Such again is the symbolism of the Apocalypse, and we may venture to add of some of our Lord's parables. In all these the meaning is clear, and the true, underlying argument easy to discern, but too

strict attention to the surface argument is mischievous. And so in this chapter of our Epistle it is necessary to break the shell of a few verses, and by help from the context to get at once to the meaning beneath them. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek; Levi was in Abraham's loins, therefore Levi gave tithes; therefore Levi is less than Melchizedek—all this is another way of saying what is said more plainly elsewhere, that the Levitical priesthood is unimportant in comparison with priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. But as this chapter is but one of thirteen, so these dry verses are but a very few out of the whole chapter. The rest of the chapter is full of direct and striking utterances, such as "another priest ariseth who hath come not according to a law of carnal ordinance but according to the power of endless life," and "the bringing in of a better hope whereby we draw nigh to God." And the dry logic itself is introduced more artistically than pedantically—it is not pressed to wearisomeness, but comes as a light, half-playful touch—to provide a suitable setting for the reference to Melchizedek. For that reference, though academic in strict form, is far from merely academic to the careful reader. Far from merely academic, for what could be more suitable to the main purpose? The author has in his mind a priesthood which is universal, has been in the world from the beginning, and possesses an unbroken life of growth running up at last into the perfect achievement of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Genesis he found a record of a king-priest not of Israel's race, who was nevertheless recognized by the founder of Israel, and is entitled by the author of Genesis "Priest of God most high." He blessed Abraham, that is he

stood on his Godward side ; through him, on that day in the far-off beginnings of the world's history, Abraham drew near to God. The author has also to shew that this ancient, abiding, universal priesthood has never been superseded by the Levitical, but has gone on side by side with it, and at last outstays the aged and worn-out Levitical institution. And ready for his purposes he found a Psalm in which a later king of Israel is hailed priest after the order of Melchizedek. The narrative in Genesis and the appeal to it in the later Psalm give him the illustration, the argument, above all the name he wants, and he describes this priesthood as Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

He finds further suggestion in the solemn language of the Genesis narrative. Melchizedek there comes suddenly upon the scene, with no mention of father, mother, or family, of origin or end ; suddenly he comes, suddenly he passes out of sight again. His name and the name of his city have significant meanings. There is just as much or as little authority for pressing these philological significances as for pressing the suddenness and silence. He chooses to press both. He finds here a picture of one who is "made like unto the Son of God," a symbol of the divine, the living, the eternal.

And this helps us to understand how he judged of the historical value of the narrative. It is not the only place in the Epistle where we are tempted to suppose that he looked upon the Old Testament with something not unlike our modern critical eye—a habit which was beginning to be shocking to the Pharisaic party of the Jews, but which Hellenists did not condemn, nor did the Christian Church for some centuries yet. We nowadays

discuss Gen. xiv. a good deal. The result of our discussions is perhaps this. Some details in the narrative appear to be unhistorical. There is no proof that the whole, taken generally, is not historical, and no substantial evidence can be alleged against the historical character of the Melchizedek incident. Yet the whole is a somewhat shadowy sketch of things that happened in dim antiquity, and we read it more as legend than as history in the strict sense of the term. So to the author of Hebrews the point of interest seems to be the picture which he finds in his national records of a foreign king-priest which—the picture rather than the man—stands out as a remarkable type of eternal priesthood. The stress he lays is on silences and suggestions, not on plain deeds or words; Melchizedek “stands there in pictured resemblance to the Son of God.” Dr. Cheyne believes that both in Genesis and in the Psalm the very name Melchizedek is due to corruption in the text; there was a time in the composition and transmission of record and of poem when this person who had no existence was also without mention. Whatever criticism this writer knew, it is not likely he had ever heard of that. But if he had, it may be doubted whether it would have made much difference to him. The picture would still be standing in the record, the later Jews who used the Psalm would still be appealing to it as witness to a more abiding priesthood than that Levitical priesthood, “on the basis of which the people observed the existing law” (vii. 11). There might be matter for critical discussion, but the authority of the canonical books and the mind of Judaism would be still the same. And he would still have a well-known, solemn, literary phrase to express

tersely what he meant by this eternal priesthood of which he was writing.

For the author's passion for drawing from the Old Testament is so necessary to be noticed if we would understand this title. Critical reader though he may have been, he used the Old Testament with the greatest reverence and affection. This ch. vii. has some far-away reminiscences of Philo; it is steeped in meditation on the Old Testament itself. The author wanted a short phrase, a label, for his idea of priesthood. None would suit him but one that came from his Scriptures. Hence he chose this: "after the order of Melchizedek." There was good reason for his preference besides the reason of reverence. The Old Testament is the only record known to us which tells the history of the ancient world with direct reference all through to the living God. That direct reference makes no small part of what we mean by its inspiration. Take that record as a whole, and you see that it does recognize throughout a priesthood of the whole nation—and here and there a larger priesthood still—running side by side with the Levitical institution. The Chronicler, with his particular Levitical enthusiasm, represents but one part of the whole national mind and literature. The phrase here chosen was not just one out of many possible phrases; it sums up the whole larger history of priesthood as the Old Testament preserves it. The phrase has peculiar merits for all who consider the Old Testament the best religious history of priesthood in the ancient world.

In one sense of course we all do consider it so. But there are many possible senses of the word "best."

We should hesitate to apply it here in the sense of "most scientific." And in one way or another our interests have become so widened and distracted that even so good a phrase from so good a book does not at once explain itself to us. If a translation of "priesthood after the order of Melchizedek" into modern language might be risked, it might be rendered "natural priesthood." Of course to a sacramentalist "what is spiritual is natural, and what is most natural is most spiritual."¹

Do we not see that there has been this "standing on the Godward side" throughout all life? Even in the large sphere of nature outside man, a working upwards has been always going on, and going on by that rule. In spite of later modifications of the theory we may still use the word "evolution" to describe this. The Epistle hints at the same process when it says that God appointed the Son heir of all things, and that by God's decree He bears all things on to their destined goal in Him for whom and through whom are all things (i. 2, ii. 10). The same idea shews itself in xi. 3, "the fitting together of the successive ages," only here the history of man is in view; it too is no mere congeries of visible events, but one age has taken its place on the Godward side of another and caused an onward developement. Another developement has worked

¹ Of course by "natural" I do not mean "physical." That epithet belongs rather to the Levitical succession, which therefore breaks off short of union with the spiritual Christ. I think "natural" the best word, for it includes the hint of vaguer application to nature beyond the personal line "man—God"; otherwise "voluntary" would almost do. Compare the stress always laid by Nestorius on free-will, not compulsion (or logic), being the bond or impulse of the sacrament of the Incarnation (of which this priesthood is but one aspect).

especially by means of concentrated effort and appointment. In the history of the world Israel has been set on the Godward side of other nations, and within Israel kings, prophets and priests have been appointed to be on the Godward side of their people. As noticed above, the artificial character of the Levitical institution did not hinder good priests from exercising the true priesthood, but they did this not because they were of the tribe of Levi, but because, being of the tribe of Levi and engaged in certain duties, they performed those duties in the true manner, "through eternal spirit." It is evident that many kings, prophets and priests did very little of such true priestly work; the best of them did it imperfectly. But the imperfect efforts were more than preparations for our Lord's perfect fulfilment; they were themselves manifestations of that Christ of whom the Old Testament is full. It is especially through kings and prophets that the developement of this natural priesthood is traced up to our Lord. And as a matter of fact we do not find very many Levites in the Old Testament conspicuous in that kind of service. Ancient history and perhaps modern thought were supporting this bold removal of the Levitical institution from the line of true priestly life. But how bold it was. It goes far beyond anything S. Paul had said about the Law, and yet how much more easy it is to reconcile with the Gospels than S. Paul. Of the Law our Lord had said that not one jot or one tittle should pass away till all was fulfilled. We can interpret that so as to justify S. Paul, yet we are bound to admit that the Judaic disciples had a case against him if they cared to plead it. But for or of the Levitical priesthood how

little our Lord said at all. Here again we seem to see a certain special connexion between this Epistle and the Galilean days of the Lord's flesh. It is at least as nearly "synoptic" as "Pauline."

One noticeable point in the matter is this: that in the Old Testament as in the Epistle the finest acts of priestly intercession on the Godward side were done through suffering. The crown of them all, perhaps, is that martyrdom which is so solemnly celebrated in Is. liii., the last of the four poems on the servant of the Lord. Only in ix. 28, "to bear the sins of many," is there definite verbal reference to that passage in the Epistle, but no sympathetic reader will doubt that to its author, as to the other New Testament writers, that passage was the key to the mystery of the Crucifixion, and a glowing illustration of his priestly theory. But more of this presently when we consider the priestly sacrifice.

For the present let us end by making briefly a further translation of his language, and consider how this principle of natural priesthood still operates. He speaks of almsgiving and the offering of praise as the Church's sacrifices (xiii. 15 f.), but there he seems to be suggesting a kind of substitute for Jewish sacrifices, not to be describing the general priestly service of the Christian Church; he calls these "sacrifices," he would hardly have called them our "sacrifice." He would no doubt agree that in every branch and relationship of life the faithful are united with their Lord, re-enacting in their own place and time His priestly action on the Godward side of those who are placed in their care, and doing this with a perfect confidence and unaffectedness because His one completed act of priesthood has taken private

doubt or pride out of theirs, and abides as foundation, complement, and spirit, to make perfect what their weakness mars. Thus the father is priest to his family; the colonel to his regiment; the elder workman to the boy who works under his direction; the head of a business firm to all employed therein; the "curate" in his parish; the king in his nation. All strong persons exercise priesthood to weaker ones, though of course strength is not only bodily strength, and many most priestly lives are spent in sickness. And that again reminds us how eminently a doctor is priest in a sickroom, a sister or nurse in a hospital ward.

Is "priest" perhaps, rather than "a priest"; just as Christians are members of Christ, not severally Christs—indeed it is remarkable how little is said about what we call the "individual," under any aspect, in the New Testament. The New Testament records the experience of a family, and the second person singular is seldom employed in apostolic grammar. The priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of the natural and universal priesthood of the ancient world. It is the source of the general priesthood of the Christian Church which is exercised in the "natural" callings of its members, not only in what is commonly styled church work. That is the doctrine of the whole New Testament, not of this Epistle alone. So it might have been expected to be, for it was already known as the doctrine of the Old Testament, though there might be parts of the Old Testament where it was obscured by the more limited doctrine of the Levitical ministry. Thus in 1 Pet. ii. 9, the Apostle takes up the words of Ex. xix. which expressed the large ideal of pre-

Levitical Israel, and says to all his readers, "Ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood," and three times in the Apocalypse are the faithful addressed generally as priests.¹

That title "priest" is never applied in the New Testament to the elders or bishops. In this Epistle those terms are not used ("elders" in xi. 2 has another sense); the word here for Church officers is "leaders" (xiii. 7, 17), which, both in its simple and compound Greek form, is used in Clement's Epistle. If it be asked how the author applies his theory of priesthood to the ministry of the Christian Church, the answer must be that he does not say anything at all on that subject. This omission cannot be quoted on any side as evidence for the origin of that ministry. The Epistle is not a general treatise on theology or on church discipline. It was written to certain friends of the author to encourage them to do a particular duty. For that purpose he develops a particular view of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and applies it to his friends' trial. He adds nothing which would distract attention from that appeal. Hence he has nothing to say about the priesthood of the officers of the Church, nor about the two sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist. As his doctrine of priesthood is larger than that special application of it, so the altar of which he speaks in xiii. 10 is neither the Cross nor the "Lord's Table," but, if the phrase be allowed, the whole altar of life. There

¹ Hebrews, 1 Peter, and the Apocalypse form a group together in which the priesthood of our Lord and His Church is part of the subject. But in 1 Peter we have but a sketch of this analogy. The author passes quickly from our Lord's sacrificial priesthood to His pastoral priesthood. He bears men's sins on the Cross; He fulfils Is. liii.; His blood is sprinkled; He is bishop or overseer; but chiefly He is the good Shepherd of the Parables, ἀρχιποίμην instead of ἀρχιερεύς.

are references in the Epistle to the two sacraments, as there are to the officers of the Church. Behind the letter there is a background of church life with a ministry and sacraments. It has been argued by those who have a right to speak on the matter that ministry and sacraments were closely connected from the first, and that the "Episcopate" grew out of the need for a president at celebrations of the Holy Communion. It is therefore more than likely that the "leaders" whom the author bids his friends to reverence were engaged, in their supreme function, upon the ministry of the sacraments. But he says nothing about this. From this, the most sacramental and priestly book in the New Testament, nothing can be drawn for the filling up of the history of special priesthood and sacrament. Naturally its priestly phraseology has been found eminently fit for adaptation in the language of the liturgies; with still greater propriety its thought has been borrowed to deepen the intention of these sacramental services. But all this lies beyond its original purpose. Had the author been asked what was the relationship of the priesthood of the ministry to the priesthood of the Lord, he would no doubt have answered that they were all one; the ministers exercised their functions as part of the Lord's priesthood. Yet perhaps the question would have occurred to no one before they had read his Epistle with its priestly analogy for the Lord's work of salvation. As for the Eucharist, S. Paul had already connected it—or used words which witness to the Church's already connecting it—with the Lord's death. In one place (1 Cor. v. 8) he had used a sacrificial analogy for the Lord's death which may itself be a

witness to church feeling at the time, and may also have been one of the suggestions from which the elaborate analogy of this Epistle (with very altered terms) arose.

What is certain is that neither S. Paul nor this writer would have separated the institutional functions of the ministry from its pastoral functions, nor the ritual communion in the sacrifice from the whole communion of life in that same sacrifice. Both would have laid stress on the union of priests' and worshippers' wills with Christ's will in the will of God. One simple consideration will persuade us how little this lack of definite instruction on the subject should affect our admiration for the sincere churchmanship of this writer. The very purpose of his letter was to prepare his friends, as he was himself prepared, for the doing of a hard duty which might quite probably involve martyrdom. That was the way in which they were to share the priesthood and the sacrifice of their Lord.

And this in ancient days was recognized as the eminent and truest communion. We know the sacramental honour paid to martyrdom in the early Church. Here is a Collect from the Leonian Sacramentary which illustrates this reverence ; it shews also the salutary feeling of later days of ease that the "sacrifice" which had once been "unto blood" in its partaking might haply become unreal to those who knew it only as "devotion" :

"Offerendorum tibi munerum Ds̄ auctor et dator praesta ut quod sc̄is martyribus in persecutione contulit claritatem nobis fiat in devotione praesidium per." ¹

¹ *Sacr. Leonianum*, ed. Feltoe, p. 88. Another version is given on p. 90, in which "hoc sacrificium singulare" has been interpolated before "quod."

O God, who art author and giver of the gifts to be offered to Thee, grant that what to the holy martyrs in persecution brought splendour may become to us in devotion patronage and defence.

Cf. *Life of Archbishop Benson*, ii. p. 147. This would not affect the fitness of the collect for my illustration, but it may be noticed as an example of the narrowly defining tendency which is so conspicuously absent from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

CHAPTER VI

PRIESTHOOD AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK : THE SACRIFICE

- (i.) "On the Godward side" describes part of priesthood—The description is completed by "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission"—The treatment of sin by cleansing is a characteristic idea of the priestly books of Old and New Testament—In this Epistle, as in Leviticus, cleansing is effected by blood, which signifies life enriched by death—For death was an important part of ceremonial sacrifice—and in real sacrifice men have spent their own lives for the cleansing and renewing of life—That involves death, *i.e.* the losing of self to share a larger self.
- (ii.) Levitical imagery is used to describe the union of the believer with Christ—Whose abiding life is vouched for by the tradition of the Church interpreted with reverence and confirmed by experience—The appeal to experience obscures the uniqueness of Christ—But if that term be just it must imply freedom to include men in Himself, not necessity to exclude them—The supremacy of our Lord in the days of His flesh corresponds to the paradox of the Gospel morality, and the argument of loyalty is stronger than logic—But the days of His flesh were the passage to the exalted life, which manifests itself in the moral progress of the world and especially in its faculty for recovery—Christ's intercession is a continuous process of creation, and His sacrifice is repeated in the will of each believer.

WE have examined the phrase, "after the order of Melchizedek," and we have translated it into the modern term, "natural priesthood." Whereas the Levitical priesthood was a mechanical institution serving a particular purpose of edification for a while, this natural priesthood has been always at work throughout the world and always must be. It is natural and universal, and therefore stands in the line of eternal movement

towards God. Our Lord's work was the centre of this movement. This natural priesthood in His work and elsewhere too is a true type or sacrament of eternal salvation. If we look at Him on earth we see Him performing the visible sign of this sacrament. If we think of Him "in heaven," we ought, in strict propriety, to drop such figured language, since there the transcendent virtue of the sacrament is reached. But even there the Epistle calls Him priest, and rightly. For if we utterly cast away sacramental imagery, we cannot think of heavenly things at all. And our Lord in carrying His manhood into the heart of the Godhead has allowed us to pursue Him thither with this inadequate but not unreal language. Thus the author of the Epistle cares for no subtler mode of describing His exaltation and supreme achievement than by picturing Him as Highpriest within the eternal sanctuary which He has entered through the veil by the way fresh-slain and living of His flesh,¹ and he says that if He were but on earth He would not be priest at all; the use-and-went of Levitical ordinances would leave no room for His supremacy (viii. 4). It is not, we see, his criticism of books or history that has overthrown the Levitical tradition, but the spiritual act of Christ in His taking up of manhood into God, and so making it impossible for the divine priesthood to endure its mechanical rival any longer among men.

The spiritual act of Christ, *i.e.* the act of His death; one sacramental act, whatever sacramental margin of teaching, example, memory, may have prepared or followed it. In this act He offered His

¹ See Westcott on x. 20,

sacrifice. Any description of His priesthood would be worse than imperfect which stopped short of the sacrifice. We have indeed touched upon this already, but it still remains to consider it at length.

We have thought of priesthood as an influence upon the Godward side, and saw that through all the history of the world this priestly influence had been at work, till at last it reached its perfect manifestation in our Lord Jesus Christ. And when we asked why the manifestation in Him was perfect and in no one before Him, we found ourselves shut up (as far as our observation of things on earth could go) to the argument of His sinlessness. But we did also notice that in all history the greatest acts of influence on the Godward side had been connected with suffering, and that our Lord was pre-eminent in His suffering. And this prepares us to consider the fulfilment of priestliness in sacrifice, of His priestliness in sacrificial death. In our study of priesthood the phrase, "on the Godward side," gives a title to the first series of thought, but for the second we have, "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (ix. 22). Priesthood is no mere influence. It is gallant and generous. The priest stands ever giving rather than receiving, offering gifts and sacrifices, and his ultimate offering must always be his own life.

There was nothing about this in Melchizedek. Yet Melchizedek appeared upon a troubled scene of violence and rapine and war—a king of righteousness from the city of peace, offering mystical gifts to Abraham who made peace by victory in war. This comparison is not drawn out in the Epistle, but the thought underlies the whole of it, "Now the God of peace who brought again

from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep in the blood of an eternal covenant." So that collect begins in which argument is summed up. It is because of the war and violence, the struggle, stain, and sin of the world that sacrifice must mean death. Throughout this Epistle the weight of sin is in the balance with the death of Christ. We almost wish it were not so. We turn again and again to the Synoptic Gospels, because this oppression is not so felt in them. It is indeed not our Lord's own isolated sinlessness which evokes so strong a sense of the divine in these Gospels, but even more the dissolving effect of His character upon sin. There are indeed sins and cruel enmities in the Synoptic Gospels, but they never dominate the clearer life that shines throughout them. In the presence of the Son of Man His holiness does away with some sins, softens some hardness, and everywhere lights up an ineffable hope in the goodness of God's purpose. We see love conquering, and we are sure that even its failures cannot be part of the eternity of things.

So He, whose earthly life was the perfect sacrament of Godhead, could look upon the ruining world which He did not doubt He would save. It was not meet that even the best of His disciples should see things so steadily and whole. In S. Paul, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak," becomes "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh"; the weak friend has become an enemy to prevent us doing the things that we would (Gal. v. 17). And this harsher view of life runs through the rest of the New Testament. It is well that is so. Else the New Testament would not be the real book it is to us, "This world that presses upon

us with all its evil" does press upon us. The Apostles acknowledge it and open glimpses of the holy world of peace within the outward struggle. The Synoptic Gospels assure us that these glimpses are not glamour but true, for in their simplicity (which no unfamiliar modes of Jewish thoughts can impair) we move at large in that other world. No wonder this author looks back with affection and reverence on those days of the flesh. If he had not seen them, or even read of them, he had heard of them, especially in quiet hours of worship, and he recognized in them the eternal sanctuary, the sabbath rest, the heavenly city, of his imaginative dreams.

But from those dreams he returned, refreshed with hope and knowledge, to rescue some friends who were still struggling in that outer world where sin and death ruled; sin and death which were tangled together in a seeming hopelessness of evil, but which could be extricated and set one against the other, so that death should make life and cleanse sin.

Of all the words which have been used to express the divine action upon sin, "cleansing" is the one which this Epistle prefers. This helps us to assign its author to his class in the sacred writers. Among the many cross divisions which may be made in the books of the Old and New Testament this is one: those that deal with sin by repentance stand on one side, those that deal with sin by cleansing on the other. To the first class the earlier prophets belong. Amos, Micah, Isaiah, rebuke their people's sins, and bid them cease from sin and do righteousness. Sin with them is injustice, and their message is that God bids the sinner turn, and in turning

he shall find life. In the main S. Paul follows those prophets. So did our Lord in the parable of the Prodigal, and perhaps in His teaching generally. Of course both He and S. Paul go deeper, yet even so this doctrine does not satisfy all consciences. For there are sinners who feel the stain even more than the chain of past sin, and who cry not so much for the freeing as for the cleansing of their conscience. For such our Lord took thought when he said to the sick man, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." And among the apostolic writings the Johannine books, and Hebrews and to some extent 1 Peter, belong to this class. In the Old Testament we find traces of this manner of thought in the imperfect records we have of early priesthood. It is probable from the analogy of the history of other creeds, that if we knew more of this early priestly thought we should find it tinged with superstitious gloom but instinct with a germ of inestimable truth. What we do actually find is that it emerges at about the time of the exile in a pure and deeper theology, in which sacrifice for sin, cleansing through blood, is the promise of a lofty spiritual hope. Ezekiel reaches out a hand on either side. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive," is in the old prophetic style. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you," is priestly, and the words about the new heart shew how the elaboration of the sacrificial system at the end of his book is to be understood. The mere rules, the rubrics, of those chapters are

a sketch of the completer rubrics of Leviticus, and lay down the lines of mechanism for the Levitical priesthood which (whatever its origin and earlier history) did appear prominently and effectually in Israel after the Captivity. But the spiritual faith of Ezekiel also runs on in Leviticus, and makes one of those connecting links we found ourselves bound to recognize between the Levitical artificiality and the eternal mind of priesthood.

We owe more than we can ever repay to the great German critics who have arranged the tangled records of Old Testament history and made God's revelation of himself through that real history so living. But they did perhaps exaggerate the spiritual eminence of the early "puritan" prophets in comparison with the ceremonial mode of expression which the later prophets and the more priestly writers preferred. The balance begins already to be redressed. We learn that the post-exilic age was far from being a barren tract of legalism. On the contrary, it was a broad and various age in which the devotion of the Psalter, the thoughtful wisdom books, new kinds of prophecy, and the fervour of apocalypse interplayed with ritual enthusiasm. And all this varied evidence of living faith part sprang from and part moulded a deeper purer creed than any Israel had known before. Nor may we separate the ritual, Levitical spirit itself from this living growth. We forget sometimes that Leviticus is but a prayer-book without the prayers. It is a set of rubrical directions for divine services which had much in them strange or even offensive to us. When we remember the shambles in the Temple, or when we look at Holman Hunt's picture of the scape-

goat, we begin to estimate how much we owe to the author to the Hebrews for so boldly freeing us from this ugly ritual of blood and suffering. Yet there is something real behind that ritual; tragic rather than ugly we might call it. And in Lev. xvii. we get something better than a rubric. We get an explanation of this tragic theology, shewing how a true doctrine of sacrifice was perhaps evolved from a primitive custom of taboo; at any rate declaring the true doctrine, and something near the very mind of God.

“And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that eateth any manner of blood; I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.”

So far the primitive taboo; then follows the Judaic theology—

“For the life (or soul) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life (or soul).”

If the old puritan prophets led the way to the parable of the prodigal Son, this tragic theology led the way to fiercer apocalyptic enthusiasm, to our Lord's venture of His life upon the Cross for the people, and to the explanation which S. Paul, our author, and the whole apostolic Church gave of the Cross. S. Paul of course comes forward here. If he has characteristics which distinguish him from the priestly class of New Testament writers he is not separated from them. These lines of distinction are always apt to fade, for they are but artificial. The harmony of the New Testament is more

remarkable than its differences. It is like a mind which gathers thought from many other minds, and grows by gathering, yet holds those thoughts in a unity. The Levitical theology has certainly some affinity with S. Paul. In particular this "Pauline" idea should be noticed in the passage of Leviticus: that so far from God requiring himself to be propitiated, it is God who gives the blood for atonement of men's souls. God's mind to men is always good; it is their mind towards Him that needs changing. But this doctrine is only called Pauline because S. Paul asserted it so strongly against pagan and popular religion. It is the doctrine of Old Testament and New Testament throughout. It is the doctrine of what Ewald calls "the true religion," that faith of Christ which according to this Epistle was in the world even before Jesus was born.

What is "atonement" or "propitiation"? In Hebrews the Greek words are rare which seem to belong strictly to that idea. The author's favourite words are those connected with "purifying" or "cleansing." Herein he differs from the general usage of the Septuagint, but it is possible that he preserves the true idea of the Hebrew ritual word. That Hebrew word is generally explained as meaning "to cover." It is used with "sins" as its object and with persons—one "covers" a man's face with a gift. Some think that the primitive idea in its ritual use was the like "covering" of God's face. But there is no clear instance of that usage in the Old Testament; if it was primitive, the true faith has corrected it. But material objects such as "altar" are also found, and "cover" hardly seems to fit them. Dr. Driver says, "in actual usage, the primary sense of *covering*

was probably altogether forgotten.”¹ A proposal, however, has been made to connect the Hebrew term with a Babylonian ritual word which signifies “cleanse.”² This explanation would suit all the ritual or theological usages in the Old Testament, and would bring this Epistle into close relationship with them. For its author at any rate “atonement” is mainly “cleansing.” Priesthood is for him a cleansing office, as it was for Keats—

“The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth’s human shores,”

And for him, as in Leviticus, this cleansing is effected by blood. “How much more shall the blood of the Christ cleanse your consciences from dead works to serve the living God.” A strange idea to us, but Leviticus again shews how to understand it. The life is in the blood; the blood is the life, it says. And we do not grasp the vigour of the passage till we notice that in the Hebrew there is but one word for “life” and “soul.” Life is given by God to cleanse life, soul to cleanse soul. The important thing is not that the Hebrews had strange ideas about blood, derived from barbarous ancestors perhaps, but that they had such large and daring ideas about life. About life, not so much in merchant’s phrase about its value as about its power. To a Christ, sprung from that race, a life offered for love and hope and obedience’ sake might well seem powerful for salvation. The force of this thought may be partly felt if we substitute “life” for “blood” in those passages of the Epistle where the word occurs: “Through his own life

¹ Deuteronomy, in *International Critical Commentary*, pp. 425 f.

² See *Enc. Biblica*, art. “Ritual,” § 8.

he entered once for all into the sanctuary, having found eternal redemption" (ix. 12); "the life of the Christ, who through eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, shall cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (ix. 14). The connexion thus becomes impressive between the blood which is the life and the "dead works," "the living God," and the repeated "eternal." So, too, we perceive how appropriate is the phrase "not by a law of carnal ordinance but by a power of indissoluble life" (vii. 16). And we think of the Lord's words in S. John's Gospel, "I came that they might have life, and have it more abundantly" (x. 10).

Yet those Johannine words are followed immediately by, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep." There is nothing there, any more than in this Epistle, about death being a punishment or a price paid. But the truth is very strongly expressed that this abundant life can only come through death, and that death, the death of the shepherd for the sheep. The former idea is implied in the "indissoluble" of Heb. vii. 16; this life is one that has passed through the shock of death and yet is not dissolved by it. The latter had been already suggested in Leviticus by the sentence, "And I have given it upon the altar," etc., and it runs all through the Epistle. Men's participation in it, their response to the divine generosity, the effectiveness of it all in their lives, is declared by the Lord in the Synoptic Gospels: "Who-soever wills to save his own life shall lose it. And whosoever shall lose his own life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it." In recognizing life as the main principle of sacrificial cleansing, we must not take any-

thing away from the reality of sacrificial death. The visible act of slaying sheds the blood and so sets it free for ritual sprinkling and offering. The spiritual act of voluntary death sets free true life for its highest service. But if we believe in that high service we must be obstinate to believe also in the reality of death. We shall not understand the sacrificial doctrine of our Epistle if we substitute for "blood" simply "life," but it may help us if we sometimes substitute "life enriched by death," and then restore the word "blood," in order to feel vividly what a terrible thing death is, how mysteriously bound up with pain and that still obscurer trouble sin.

It is necessary to dwell somewhat laboriously on this point, because it has been rather forgotten in the reaction against the long-continued interpretation of this sacrificial Epistle in terms of the price paid. That interpretation certainly dominated the Middle Ages and lasted on into our own.¹ It was itself based on an exaggeration of one side of S. Paul's teaching. It made our Epistle a metaphorical repetition of that teaching, and so aided the popular confusion of Hebrews with the Pauline canon. To some extent it still exercises a sway even upon critical minds, and hinders them from recognizing the originality of the Epistle. A protest was made against it by the Arminians and Socinians of the sixteenth century, but it was Westcott's commentary which finally proved its perversity. When he wrote, the researches of Robertson Smith and others before him had discovered much of the root ideas of Semitic sacrifice. This new knowledge was in the air, but perhaps affected

¹ See Ménégos, *La Théologie de l'Épître aux Hébreux*, ch. vii., Influence théologique de l'Épître.

Westcott indirectly. What gave him his power was his intimate sympathy with S. John. He came to Hebrews with a heart full of the Johannine hope in life, and found the same hope here, though somewhat differently expressed, and he so insisted upon it in his commentary that we can never read the Epistle in any other sense again, even though vague recollections of the earlier interpretation hang about us.

But Westcott's disciples have been apt to simplify his complex mysticism by hardening his outlines and omitting part of his thought. Westcott did recognize the reality and importance of death as the channel of life. He has been corrected—whether mistakenly or not—in his interpretation of v. 7. He writes: "The phrase covers two distinct ideas, 'to save from physical death so that it should be escaped,' 'to bring safe out of death into a new life.' In the first sense the prayer recorded in Joh. xii. 27 was not granted, that it might be granted in the second." The hasty literalist rejects the second interpretation as being an unnatural meaning to give to ordinary words; the hasty disciple seizes on the second interpretation as being consonant to Westcott's doctrine of life. But Westcott himself recognized both meanings, both have their place in the doctrine of the Epistle, and he knew that his author would enjoy the subtle Virgilian use of one select phrase to convey a twofold thought.¹

¹ Professor Bethune Baker says of Nestorius (*Nestorius*, p. 174): "He cannot find any peace of mind in the fog, or golden haze, whichever we prefer to call it, of the ambiguous phrase which half conceals and half reveals the truth he sees so clearly." This is of course said in a different connexion from the remarks above. But I have quoted Nestorius so often to illustrate the Epistle in spite of the prejudice against him (which it seems to me Professor Bethune Baker successfully removes) that it may be worth while adding this: Nestorius is generally in harmony with our author, but he does

At any rate this is one of many places where Westcott shewed that the thought of the power of indissoluble life did not displace in him the complementary thought of death as the means of life. It has, since he wrote, sometimes tended to do so. And Westcott's own argument receives adjustment of emphasis from later studies in the Gospels. Other things as well as that apocalyptic view which we noticed in an earlier chapter have recalled our attention to the sacramental limitations of the days of our Lord's flesh. But the apocalyptic view in particular has shewn how our Lord's heroic will operated mainly in the sphere of suffering and through actual physical death; we perceive that the spiritual possibilities of His act are diminished if we forget the physical facts at all. Part of the reason for which we recognize the supreme significance of the Crucifixion certainly lies in this: it was so awful.

The analogy of Levitical sacrifices points in the same direction. Westcott notices that nothing is said in the Old Testament about the suffering of the victim. But there seems little significance in that omission, since these passages are generally but rubrical directions. It is true that the callousness to such suffering rather surprises us in all sacrificial references, *e.g.* in the classical poets; and it must also be remembered that in a well-ordered sacrifice the suffering of the victim would be small; some people might observe with almost equal surprise the callousness with which we to-day consider

sometimes clarify or harden, "whichever we prefer to call it," what the Epistle expresses more largely and poetically; and so far there is a presumption that the Epistle may sometimes be the more orthodox. But this comparison might be made between the New Testament generally and later writers,

the preparation of butcher's meat. Since most sacrifices did indeed end in a feast, this last consideration is not so impertinent as it might appear. Still there is the difference that the sacrifice was a religious ceremony, and being so, it must have invested with solemn awe even the painless death of the victim. When the blow was struck its visible life was irrevocably cut short. However faith might declare that the streaming blood was still its life, and that the sequent operations with this blood were higher uses of life than could have been enjoyed while in the body, nevertheless strange thoughts would occur; the awful sense of the unknown darkness, the feeling of pity, and in those modern times in which our author wrote the oppression of doubt. Was, after all, this physical blood, so helpless in the hands of the priest, life? Was there, after all, any virtue—even in its appeal to the mental feelings—in such make-believe? At first there was the awe and pity of faith; later there was the sadder pity of doubt, pity for a wasted life. And then it was high time to sweep it all away. A wasted life could be no sacrifice; it could be nothing but a dark shadow, with the one consoling quality that it was but a shadow and would pass away when the true light filled the world.

And so once more we turn away from Levitical analogies. Again they have done all they can do for us by supplying a language in which real thought may be expressed. We turn to the living history of men in which real life has been willingly spent for the purifying and renewing of life. And there we see that this has always been achieved at the cost of real life, which however has not been wasted or destroyed, but has itself

flourished more gloriously by its renunciation. Every one can find examples for himself from history, or probably in the circle of his own age and acquaintances. Ch. xi. in the Epistle is mainly a list of such examples. To take one where the language emphasizes this point—Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Here the renunciation was made, and though the act of son-slaughter was hindered, nevertheless the sacrifice was recognized as sacrifice, and if there was no reality of bloodshed there was all the reality of mental suffering and victory. Or the prophets might be taken, all of whom renounced everything that might seem worth living for; Jeremiah, for instance, who left the old paths of sacerdotal order and the quiet paths of scholarship, and stood in public gaze as a new-fangled Puritan, a free thinker, and a traitor to his country. There was no reality of bloodshed here, though he came very near even to that; doubtless that kind of reality would have been a far easier death to Jeremiah than the spiritual death he did endure. But there was no waste, though it was an essential part of the reality of his service that all should seem wasted in his own day. As far as common glory goes he has received a hundredfold more now in this present world than Homer or Aeschylus or Plato or Virgil. And as for eternal life, that was just what his renunciation did give to Israel at the very moment when all seemed lost. And in like season his gospel has still renewed life, as we see, for instance, in this Epistle; Jeremiah's doctrine of the New Covenant is quoted at length (viii. 8-12) as containing the source of life when the old and worn out ordinance was nigh unto passing away,

Some have thought that the poem of the suffering servant (Is. liii.) was originally a celebration of the life and sacrifice of Jeremiah. If it indeed was written by the "great unnamed" of the exile, this may well be. If so, we can hardly doubt that the poem refers to his actual and physical death as a martyr. Dr. Kennett believes it is a later piece, and refers it to the nation which had just come through its martyr struggle with the Maccabees, and by its terrible sufferings had found a new life not for itself alone but for the world outside as well. He believes, though he hardly proves, that this missionary hope was not thought of before those later days. He believes too that the nation must be meant and no particular man, because even in Maccabean days the idea of a particular man's life continuing and growing after death had not been heard of. The author of Hebrews, who read 2 Maccabees, judges otherwise about this, and it might be argued that the end of Daniel justified his judgement. And indeed it seems by no means clear that such a faith was unfelt by pious Israelites at a much earlier time. "Unfelt"; for it would have been no clear-cut dogma of resurrection and judgement to come such as Daniel contains, but a mystical conviction of indissoluble life in God, a mystical conviction free from the perplexities which modern or even post-exilic notions of personality have brought in. But is not such a mystical conviction sufficient to explain the language of Is. liii.? And if so, need we be anxious for our present purpose about the date, authorship and historical foundation of the passage? It is with this passage as we saw it was with the narrative of Melchizedek. There the historical basis mattered little,

here the precise historical base matters little. The record stands as a picture of true priesthood or true sacrifice. Behind it, whenever it was written, lie the life and death of actual men who have endured real martyrdom. Their love and heroism is interpreted in the light of God's character by one who knew God well. He threw his whole meditation into a dramatic form and pictured a particular martyr. And the picture shews just this, that true, spiritual, eternal life comes forth from the caverns of death, and when it comes forth it comes for others: "unless the grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it remaineth by itself alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit" (S. Joh. xii. 24).¹

But though suffering is part of the reality of sacrifice, it is only such as being one of the most frequent opportunities for the action of will and love. Sacrifice is the supreme act of life, and it implies far more than can be adequately described as suffering. What is

¹ For another explanation of the "Servant Songs" see Cheyne, *The Mines of Isaiah Re-explored*, pp. 27-33. He finds in these passages an ancient myth deepened and corrected by later inspiration, which was however unconscious of the origin of its material. "The Divine Guardian of Israel" had been in the most ancient faith a "mythical" Person, rudely conceived but always divine, "a god friendly to man, who for man's sake subjected himself to death, but came to life again—a tale of mystic meaning, told and retold in the sanctuaries to the devotees." This may have been applied to faithful Israel, but the application scarcely fits. "If in later Judaism Israel itself was said to have pre-existed, that can only have been due to a deepening of the conception of God, who was now thought of as enfolding Israel, and all who recognized the true God, in the depths of His Being. It was a step in this direction that Israel acknowledged in its Guardian not any transient angelic being, but a Divine Person, whose being was not terminable so soon as the need for His services had ceased, but was as necessary and endless as that of the Lord Yahweh Himself."

Dr. Cheyne's imaginative erudition suggests the possibility of combining mystical enthusiasm with historical experience in the intense expectation of these truly Messianic poems.

surrendered when life passes through death? In the *Analogy* (I. i.) Butler says that death is certainly the destruction of our "present powers of sensation," but probably neither the destruction nor the suspension of our "present reflective powers." Readers of Shelley will remember how much of his poetry is almost like a commentary upon that passage. What are those reflective powers which are or have become independent of the bodily organization? Shelley is always very honest about that question, and his unshaken faith in immortality has been misjudged in consequence. But there can be no doubt that his hope for the life that survives is high; that life is alone life to him. Sometimes he describes it in such conventional language as vivid description demands. Sometimes he goes beyond this and dissolves into uncertain phrases which have earned him the reproach of inconsistency and pantheism. He seems however to be feeling after a quite scriptural idea which may be put in this way: that when we speak of God as Person we mean something larger, more inclusive, than any conception we can develop of a person in this state of limitations. Such is S. Paul's idea in his hope for the end, "that God may be all in all." Now whatever this may imply, we are of course assured by our faith in God's purpose as absolutely good, that it implies increase not decrease of such eternal affections as love. Hence Shelley's other, more figurative, language is justified so far as it is calculated to serve this faith, and our simple hopes of recognition of one another in the eternal world are justified when they express our self-forgetting love. Indeed it may be, as some have held, that our present limited con-

ception of ourselves as persons is the highest and most far-reaching conception of life and love that can be used even for philosophical purposes. Only S. Paul's phrase does not appear quite to support that view. And it is obvious that this limited conception is apt to spoil our best affections by importing something selfish into our love and hope.¹ Hence our Lord's words about losing life for His sake if we would indeed find it come in to reinforce and explain S. Paul. The Greek word for life or soul may often be best translated by "self," and real death, from which springs enriched life, seems always to involve the ridding from the idea of "person" the corroding element of "myself." "I live, yet not I; Christ liveth in me": again and again we return to that central confession of Paulinism—Paul-

¹Cf. Von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, ii. p. 195f.: "It is not worth while to attempt to rescue, Aristotle-wise, just that single, and doubtless not the highest, function of man's spirit and character, his dialectic faculty, or even his intellectual intuitive power, for the purpose of thus escaping, or at least minimizing, the difficulties attendant upon the belief in Immortality. If we postulate, as we do, man's survival, we must postulate, without being able to fill in or to justify any details of the scheme, the survival of all that may or does constitute man's true and ultimate personality. How much or how little this may precisely mean . . . we evidently know enough to be confident that it means more than the abstractive, increasingly dualistic school of Plato, Philo, Plotinus, Proclus would allow."

Mr. Streeter (*Foundations*, p. 132) finds satisfactory expression of "the survival of a full and distinct personality" in Tennyson's lines :

"Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside ;
And I shall know him when we meet."

Certainly no hope of Immortality is a hope for less than that knowledge. But "form" and "knowledge" seem too parallel with the "dialectic faculty," "the intellectual intuitive power," to be quite adequate expressions. The larger hint is given by Tennyson in his "Christ that is to be." "Enough to be with Him" said a wise man once when such speculation was going on. The utmost reach of this hope has been marked by our Lord's creative restoration of the Old Testament's mystical faith, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit—Father."

inism in expression, but in sense universal Gospel. In this Epistle ch. x. expresses it in another way by its teaching of Christ's will made one with the divine will, and our own wills consecrated in that divine will also. In the final collect there is the same idea ; Jesus learning obedience ; Jesus Christ exalted by the will that has been lost and found in the divine will ; the author at peace because he has gone through the same transformation ; his prayer for his friends that their will too may be thus lost and found and they too enter into peace, brought back from the dead in the life of eternal covenant. And if these two passages are prominent examples of the author's argument, the plain and definite purpose of the whole letter is, from beginning to end, of like character.

Now here in this good will to lose all that may be called self, and so not to lose true self, but gain a larger self for others to share, we do find a spiritual reality in our Lord's death which cuts it quite off from all likeness to Levitical sacrifices, joins it with all noble sacrifice in the history of men, and opens immense possibilities for His faith and purpose in dying for men.

And is not this after all the spiritual essence of that apocalyptic view of the Gospel which we have discussed ? It may reveal unexpected limitations in our Lord's historical environment. The more we meditate on the whole Gospel the more we may hesitate to define those limitations, and the more assuredly shall we adore the love and faith and courage that transformed them into glories. But there is no need to discover the whole of the Messianic secret. We already see that to die in order that God's Kingdom may come is the most complete laying down of all that is meant by self that we

can conceive. In the apocalyptic history of the Synop-
tists this sacrifice of selfhood is presented in that simple
manner. In the reflective reproduction of our Lord's
mind which we have in S. John's Gospel it appears in
another manner. "I am the way, the truth, and the life,"
said the Christ of the last discourses, when the going to
the Father was spoken off. Hort's Hulsean lectures
have forbidden us ever again to interpret that saying as
a mere metaphor for "I lead the way, I shew the truth,
I give the life." The "I am" is (so to speak where no
words are adequate) literal. Christ promises to be, claims
to be already, the principle and universal heart of all
history, thought, life. We recognize the claim as in
harmony with Nicene theology. We embrace it as an
answer to all misgiving and a power in all trial. But we
perhaps forget how all that we understand by "selfhood"
must be laid aside by One who would make such a claim
His own. It is indeed the welling up of tremendous life,
but it is also the veriest reality of death.

II

Let us recapitulate so far. The Epistle describes the
sacrifice of Christ in language borrowed from Levitical
use, but connects it in no other way with Levitical sacrifices.
They were not types fulfilled in His sacrifice. They were
shadows which pass away and leave nothing but a pictur-
esque language behind them. As with the Godward-stand-
ing function of His priesthood, so with the sacrifice. The
types were the manifestations of it in history. These
had been imperfect; but the same in kind. Those who
had offered such sacrifice—the suffering servant in Isaiah
is the pre-eminent example—offered themselves in their

own lives. The offering was made by means of death which, endured in all reality, set free their life, in larger reality to serve their brethren; to bring them to God. Bringing into the presence of God is salvation in terms of sacrifice. Standing on the Godward side and offering sacrifice are not after all two functions of priesthood, but one process. Sacrifice of life completes the standing on the Godward side.

So far we have concentrated attention mainly on the death through which the life is freed or enriched. We go on to consider the enriched life itself. The death in our Lord's supreme manifestation of sacrifice was the death on the Cross. The author describes it, in Levitical language, as a sacrifice in the most humiliating aspect of sacrifice. When all the solemn ritual of the sin offering was finished, the meaner parts of the victim were burnt without the camp. So our Lord suffered without the camp. His death was the off-scouring of a sacrifice rather than a sacrifice itself in the Levitical sense. Thus we are carried beyond the mere imagery. Thus there is seen to be no Levitical sacrifice here at all. "We have an altar" outside the institutional Temple or Tabernacle, in the wide world of life itself, where the visible pains and humiliation of men are the ritual of spiritual union with God in Christ.

But this spiritual union is the partaking of the other side of the sacrifice. It springs from Christ's life, set free and enriched by His death. How does our Epistle help us to believe in that life?

Once more the language is borrowed from the worn-out rites of the Tabernacle. Jesus entered within the veil (vi. 19 f.), having made a new way through the veil into the holy place (x. 19 f.). He cleanses the heavenly

sanctuary and appears in the presence of God on our behalf (ix. 23 f.). He has entered once for all into the better and more perfect sanctuary, having found eternal redemption (ix. 11 f.). He has been hailed by God on His entrance as Highpriest after the order of Melchizedek (v. 10). His offering has been made once for all, but He remains in the divine presence, exercising a priesthood which does not pass away, ever living to make intercession for us (vii. 25 ff.).

Such are the liturgical *formulae* which are used to make vivid pictures of this priestly life enriched by death. But even in the references made there are phrases—like eternal redemption—which go beyond the *formulae*. In like manner other pictures are interspersed with the Levitical ones, such as the repeated mention of the royal throne on which Christ sits at the right hand of God, and the unshaken kingdom which the faithful are receiving from Him (xii. 28). And the passage on the covenant (ix. 15 ff.) is indeed connected with sacrifice, but goes beyond it.

All this reminds us that we are to understand this picture-language reasonably, and are not to be limited by the analogy in our meditation on the truth it only helps to demonstrate. In the same way certain slight inconsistencies are not troublesome but satisfactory, for they point in the same direction, warning us against a mischievous literalism. Thus our Lord is regularly represented as having entered the heavenly sanctuary as our forerunner, opening the way for us to follow, and the Christian faith clearly must consist in following; so long as we remain outside we are not true Christians. Yet the verse which speaks of His making intercession for us seems rather to imply that His people are still outside,

and there is no doubt that the Epistle as a whole is a "word of exhortation," urging to follow, not (as is S. Paul's habit) claiming an already effected union. This is partly due to the actual position of the men to whom the letter was written—a particular knot of friends, with a particular duty before them, which as yet they shrank from doing. Yet closely as the author deals with them, there is a wider outlook in his mind, and he seems to be expecting a general trial, which will bring many wavering churchmen into the very place of peace. The cloud of Jerusalem doomed hangs over this Epistle as it does not hang over any of S. Paul's. So far the inconsistency is so natural as to be hardly an inconsistency at all. But in ch. ix. Christ is pictured as priest within the sanctuary, and the people waiting for Him to come forth, when He shall appear a second time without sin for salvation. Here the idea is really different. Before we have had Christ entering, His people to follow. Here we have Christ entering, His people to wait for His coming forth. The former is what ought to be the result of Levitical sacrifices, though it is not, because they are not real. The latter is indeed what takes place in Levitical sacrifices, and it is represented as a proper thing. There is an inconsistency here in the presentation of the truth itself, and this is one which must continually force itself upon us in actual life. The kingdom has come, yet we still use the prayer "Thy kingdom come." We are "in Christ," as S. Paul expresses our present state, yet we expect Christ's coming. We believe in the communion of saints, yet we also look for the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. It is one of those paradoxes which must always be accepted if we would

try to grasp truth which is truth indeed. Yet for this author there is again a special reason for his twofold point of view. We shall consider this more carefully in another place, but we may say at once that the imminent crisis of Jerusalem seems to put him in quite a peculiar position among New Testament writers in respect to the "second coming" of the Lord.

Into that we do not go now. All we observe at present is that these slight inconsistencies and varieties of imagery warn us to pass beyond the imagery, and consider, as we may, the truth which lies behind it.

That truth is the enriched, abiding, effective life of the exalted Christ. And we must begin by asking what reason we have for believing in such a life at all.

The author's first answer would evidently be that we have the Church's tradition of the Resurrection. He refers to this directly in his final collect (xiii. 20), "Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep in the blood of an eternal covenant, our Lord Jesus." The reference is clear in itself, but becomes more forcible still when we compare it with the saying recorded in S. Mk. xiv. 26 ff. and S. Mt. xxvi. 30 ff., "when they had sung a hymn they went out unto the mount of Olives. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered. But after I am risen I will go before you into Galilee." And besides this plain reference the whole Epistle is founded on the tradition; every passage in which the Lord's exaltation is celebrated presupposes His resurrection.

At the same time it must be observed that the Resurrection is referred to only in general terms. Nothing

is said of the women going to the tomb and finding it empty, nothing of any appearance of the risen Lord. It might even seem that the author leaves no room for such appearances, since his argument is that the sacrifice is the entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, and that at the very moment when Jesus died on the Cross, Jesus the acknowledged Christ, hailed Highpriest, was exalted above the heavens. To him resurrection and ascension are all one. Is this evidence for an earlier tradition, different from that in our Gospels? It is unnecessary to think so. The appearances might all be appearances of the exalted Christ, as two in the Acts, to S. Stephen and S. Paul, obviously were. And in a letter, which is written for a special purpose, and is felt by its writer to be too long already (xiii. 22), there was no obligation to go at length into the narrative of the first Easter morning. Nevertheless some readers of the Epistle will feel that these omissions and modifications are significant. Whatever the author's own mind was, the friends he addressed were evidently men of limited belief, and he (it might seem) spares them difficult problems as far as he may. It is significant that he and they should desire this sparing; it is also significant that he should be able to write thus without objection being raised. And private though the letter may have been, his deference to authority (x. 25, xiii. 17) and the early and admiring use of his Epistle by S. Clement of Rome justify our supposing that objection would not be raised to it. Once more we are led to give thought to modern difficulties,—the difficulties which are now so widely felt about the Gospel narratives; how the body of our Lord was not found in the tomb, how S. Peter went into

the tomb and saw the empty grave clothes. These difficulties have been treated as questions of evidence. The evidence may be more or less strong for different points in the narrative. Encouraged by the new apocalyptic criticism of the Gospels, we shall be wise if we recognize that even uncertain evidence may prove to fit better than we expect into the whole story, and that the strangeness of these assertions is by no means a good argument for doubting them. But the question is not—at least for us in our present-day stage of thought—a question mainly of evidence, but rather one of interpretation, and of what must be called, for want of a better term, religious philosophy. Accept the narratives as they stand, and still we have to ask, what do they mean? Still we have to ask (as Dr. Sanday so often bids us ask), if we with our modern ways of observation, of translating the message that our senses give us, of describing thought in words,—if we would have told the story just as the evangelists told it. The fourth Gospel is in some respects very modern (though in others still further removed from our habits of thought than the synoptists), and in some places we almost suspect that its author has already begun to refine the interpretation of the primitive report. He tells us for instance what S. Peter saw in the tomb; of the other disciple he only says that “he saw and believed.” The four Gospels evidently declare that the different persons engaged in that Easter drama saw different things. A few years ago it was acute criticism to set those differences one against another, as though discrediting the historical character of the narratives. We outgrow that criticism now and recognize that a spiritual act, involving the influx of

another order of life into the sphere of space and time, would surely present itself with such variety of visible manifestation. We recognize that "sacrament" and "symbol" do not spell unreality,¹ and we allow that it must have been by symbols that the risen Lord declared His indissoluble life.

The old-fashioned rationalism was bound up with the preconception that we shall best appreciate and use the life of Christ if we clear away metaphysics, and reverence it simply as the noblest life ever lived by man on earth. If there be more than that, we cannot and need not know that more. The example, teaching, memory, are the highest things within our reach. Some influence springing from that example and love still abides and works among us. But what that influence is in itself we cannot know. It is insincere and contrary to true religion to insist on more. This was a strong, austere, unselfish faith, stoical if not Christian; and yet more Christian than stoical, since that vague doctrine of the Spirit was rich in possibilities of growth. Yet it was not the faith of the New Testament and the early Church; it has never been the faith of the vigorous missionary Church; and in spite of beautiful exceptions those days so lately past were perhaps not very happy days for thinkers; there was still faith but it was an anxious faith.

Those days are past or quickly passing. We are more generally ready to welcome the idea of the other world breaking in upon this world. The latest philosophy seems, or almost seems, to encourage this. And ordinary

¹ See Dr. Sanday's chapter on "The Symbolism of the Bible" in *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*. And cf. Pascal, *Pensées*, "Tout ce qui ne va point à la charité est figure. L'unique objet de l'Écriture est la charité. Tout ce qui ne va point à l'unique but en est la figure."

people are willing to be surprised ; they scarcely recognize real greatness unless there is something awful and unexpected in it. And here, when we read of our Lord's resurrection, we rise to sympathy with those ancient historians who so clearly mean to make us understand that after the Lord's visible death the eternal and invisible did, as it were, break through the mist of use and wont, and the Lord "presented himself living after his passion by many proofs" (Acts i. 3).

But all this makes some interpretations of the evangelists' narrative more difficult than ever. Some who have been cheered by hopes like these hear of discussions about what became of the Lord's body in space and time, and suffer the same kind of disappointment as when they are asked to believe in life beyond death on the evidence of "psychic phenomena." These phenomena may possibly prove the continuance of physical life, but they spoil, or at least they seem to us in our present imperfect knowledge of the connexion of physical and spiritual, to spoil faith in the communion of saints. It would seem such an earthly, limited life that was thus continued.

Such are the reflexions that flit from brain to brain of us modern men, who enjoy such a variety of knowledge, yet lack depth often ; who think more quickly perhaps than our grandfathers, yet not generally so strongly. They are reflexions of very imperfect wisdom. Yet such as they are they merit some indulgence, and it would be pleasant to suppose that those persons are guilty of no dishonesty who use the Creed, and are unwilling to go beyond the few words in which it declares the resurrection. They use the words and

do not care to say how far those words are literal or symbolical; how far they simply repeat the Gospel language, or how far on the other hand they affix a particular interpretation upon that language. It would be pleasant to suppose this. And perhaps the reticence of the Epistle to the Hebrews permits us to suppose it. The reticence of this Epistle suggests that such indulgence was admitted in the early Church, and the appeal of our Articles to Scripture permits us to fall back upon the Epistle as an example for these later days. Only it should be remembered that reticence is one thing; express denial, freedom of speech is another. Freedom like truth may be praised in an ambiguous sense. There are times for courage and honesty in proclaiming what we know; but that is the prior question, do we know, or are we only in doubt? And with regard to the Resurrection it should be noticed that the Epistle to the Hebrews—even if its reticence have the utmost significance—is but a small part of the evidence that makes for fuller knowledge. The unlikeness of other parts of the New Testament is important. Indeed, we may perceive an important limitation in the general Christian doctrine of this Epistle itself, which may be connected with its peculiar attitude to the Resurrection. Baron von Hügel says in *The Mystical Element of Religion*, ii. p. 201, that “the body and human fellowship” are “two subjects which are shewn to be closely inter-related by the continuous manner in which they stand and fall together throughout the history of philosophy and religion.” And we cannot but feel that the human fellowship of the Church, so largely treated in the Pauline Epistles, is not made so much of

in this Epistle. We have indeed a glorious picture of the saints in their multitude beyond the veil, but the doctrine of the communion of saints on earth is not so clear. We have indeed, as in the old Jewish writings, generous precepts about service to the needy and almsgiving, but there is an aristocratic ring about it all which, noble as it is, falls short of the boundless simplicity of S. Paul and the Synoptists. The Epistle in this respect is aristocratic as Plato is aristocratic, and it is hard not to suspect that the Platonic attitude towards the body had affected those Hellenists, and even to some extent the author of the letter, and that the cautious language about the Resurrection and the silence about the Church are rather too closely connected together. The bold language of the synoptic narratives, the obstinate literalism of popular Christianity, the reverence which forbids the catholic thinker to meddle rashly with what may be symbol, but may also be more scientific than he knows—these are salutary antidotes—

“Wanderers come home! when erring most
Christ’s Church aye kept the faith, nor lost
One grain of Holy Truth.”

But secondly, though it is this author’s way to appeal to tradition, it is not his way to make a bare appeal, as to an absolute authority which may not be questioned or confirmed by reason. Naturally it is not, since he is writing to men who were not altogether willing to submit to authority. Hence he confirms the tradition from the present experience of men upon earth. We recognize once more that his mind is sacramental rather than mystical or intuitional. To him the only way confirmation is possible is through

experience; only through visible, earthly, natural life can he find the divine, the eternal. Thus the reason for believing in Christ's continued life fuses itself with the description of what that life is. We shall know it is there if we perceive it working.

Now according to the imagery of the Epistle this exalted life is a larger life. Jesus has become Jesus Christ; He has been hailed Highpriest; He is now separate from sinners; and there is no need for varieties of curious doctrine, because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.

This last passage reminds us of the Johannine "I am the way, the truth, and the life." As often in this Epistle, it reads like a first sketch, whereas the Johannine is the "perfection of ultimate utterance." But it too sets the Christian faith once for all in its permanently supreme place among the faiths and hopes and criticisms and progress of mankind.

The difficulty is often felt of upholding the uniqueness of Christ. If He was Son of Man because He was with real limitations man; if the Godhead is reached by the sacrament of this common manhood; how can we say that He differs in kind from other men? Again, if there is so much truth in other religions as we find ourselves bound to admit there is, and if the truth of Christianity, as we hold it, is mingled with elements that are not pure truth—and again we find ourselves bound to admit this—how can we say that Christianity is different in kind from all other religions and is bound to supersede them?

The first reply to this would be that though we may be surprised, and though we may have lately

discovered the difficulty for ourselves, it is not a modern difficulty at all, but is fully recognized in the New Testament. There may be verses in the Synoptic Gospels which will bear an interpretation that looks in another direction, but their general account is that our Lord based His whole teaching on His being the same in kind as other men, and that He accepted Judaism as true religion.¹ S. Paul more than once asserts that God did shew truth to heathen nations of the same kind as that which He has shewn more abundantly in Christian. Heathen truth, as really as Jewish Law, has been a pedagogue to lead to Christ. This Epistle, in harmony throughout, sums up that doctrine in the phrase, "priest after the order of Melchizedek." Melchizedek, who was priest of God most high among the heathen, is the true type of priesthood, and our Lord's priesthood is the continuation of that type.

Again, the Epistle to the Ephesians sets forth distinctly what the other Pauline Epistles and the Gospel according to S. John, and we may believe the Lord Himself who speaks through that Gospel, imply; that whereas Jesus was "a man"² on earth, the exalted

¹ Cf. Hamilton, *The People of God*, I. p. vi: "Christianity is simply the religion of the Jews reorganized by Jesus the Messiah."

² I keep the expression "a man," though with doubt as to its sufficiency. Something is gained by removing the particularizing article, but the gain seems to involve the loss of something else which we cannot spare. The point is argued by Dr. Mackintosh (*The Person of Jesus Christ*, pp. 385-390). Dr. Mackintosh criticizes Dr. Du Bose and Dr. Moberly, and says: "The writers I have named constantly suppose that we must choose between saying that Christ was not a man, but humanity inclusive, and dismissing Him as but one more good man, a simple member of the race, to whom we are related exactly as one unit is to his neighbour. The alternative is quite unreal. . . . The individual, in short, is not the contrary of the universal; in varied degree he is the universal in concrete form. Hence without ceasing

“Jesus Christ” embraces in his Christhood all His followers. And this doctrine too runs through Hebrews. At first in a form which is very interesting to the historian of theology; the saints of the Old Testament were partakers of the Christ in their days, and the new partaking is but the completion of the old; part of the honour of the Christian faith is derived from its ancient ancestry. Then in that final collect (to which we have to refer so often, as to the brief utterance in which our self-effacing author shews us his whole deep heart) we have the full Pauline doctrine; while his friends have still to follow the path of discipline which Jesus trod, his own life is hid with Jesus Christ in God.

“Unique” is indeed by no means a happy word to describe our Lord’s Person, Life, Work. His manhood is manhood because it began by a real partaking of the common flesh and blood; His Godhead is Godhead because it does not separate Him from, but joins Him more intimately with men.

Dr. Strzygowski, in a lecture at King’s College, London, gathered up for a popular audience the conclusions to which his long study of Christian art has led him. The impression left upon one of that audience was that whereas we used to see a school of art born like a man in a certain place at a certain time, growing to maturity, dying, and leaving an influence behind, we

to be individual, Christ may be the universal, focal member of our organic race. No incongruity obtains as between these two things. On the contrary, it is matter of common knowledge that the greater a man is—the more numerous the points at which he has contact with, and affects, the human environment—the more self-possessed and concrete his individuality. We can only think of the Lord Jesus Christ as the ideal limit of this conjunction, linked to all men in His Divine outflowing love, yet always master of His self-conditioned life.”

now find—at least with respect to the early origins—that we cannot really see this. What we do see is a river, flowing on and growing greater as it flows. Its stream is impelled and fed and circles into eddies from the force of many currents, coming we know not whence, and losing themselves in the endless river whose life they share and increase. So Constantinople and Rome are not sources of Christian art, but rather *foci* (to shift the metaphor to Dr. Strzygowski's own language) which gather up rays from hundreds of sources in Asia Minor and elsewhere, and from which those rays are again distributed.

This might seem to illustrate the stream of life and truth in Christ. It flows on for ever, a great and growing river. Currents of thought and action come into it from a hundred sides. They have been coming since the world began; He is Priest after the order of Melchizedek. They still come in; from the philosophies of successive generations; from the changes and chances in the careers of men and nations, which stir doubts, hopes, heroisms, processes of civilization, revolutions of government, leaps of intellect, and miracles of saintliness and secret devotion. They come from the troubles and deliverances of private consciences, and from the quiet knitting of family affections; from patriotic enthusiasm and the mutual necessities of nations; from schisms, heresies and the patience of the Church; from the championship of ancient faiths, from their supersession, renewal and transformation. They come from all manner of scattered and hidden beginnings; they are 'purified as they run; the foul and false is purged away, and the courage, holiness, and truth which the purging

reinforces, become part of that growing truth and life, which we call the Faith of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

All this might very well represent the mind of the first readers of our Epistle, Jews broadened by Hellenism, whose Christian churchmanship—so their friend thought—was too broad to be thoroughly Christian. For the Christian Church does go farther. To her this endless river has a source—in the Word of God. So far again those readers would no doubt also go. But to the Christian Church “the days of the Lord’s flesh” are much more than one of many gathering points of life; they have a more direct connexion with the source. The Church expresses this by the doctrine of the one Person, Jesus Christ, both God and man. As far as this Epistle had an intellectual aim, it was to confirm that doctrine, traditional then though perhaps not as yet thus formulated, in the understanding of the author’s friends. So far as it had a moral aim, it was to urge them to be loyal to that Person. To different minds different arguments avail for the recommending of this doctrine. Not least powerful among the arguments to the intellect is that one of which this Epistle makes so much; the fitness of humiliation for the priestly work of salvation. He who has been convinced by the self-evident sublimity of the Gospel ethics will recognize that the obscurity of the Lord Jesus, the seeming unlikeliness of that one life out of many being the cause of salvation, is the appropriate paradox. But this will be when the Gospel ethics have convinced him. And few modern readers will doubt that in this Epistle it is ultimately the moral argument which convinces. If the first readers

responded to the claim upon their loyalty, they accepted the reasoning of the Epistle. If things happen in our own days to rouse the sense of loyalty to Jesus the "captain" (xii. 2), the dogmatic problem is solved. That is the truth which gives this Epistle all its fire. The doctrine of the "One Person" is expressed dogmatically, in a sentence with a predicate, by S. John; "the Word was made flesh." The same is expressed in our Epistle in the ancient style of Israel by—no predicate and sentence—but by the battle-cry; "Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day the same and unto the ages."¹ That shews the spirit of the author and the temper of the times—times in which loyalty was the Church quality chiefly needed.

But after all that is only the beginning of the Christian argument. The New Testament concentrates upon the Cross as being the passage to a life that has continued, operated, and increased in effect ever since. The argument is partly the same as that with which Heb. xi. opens. "There is such a real power as faith"; and then the chapter goes on to prove the assertion by rehearsing deeds which can be accounted for in no other way but by virtue of this real energy. That first; in Christianity there must always be sooner or later the

¹ Deut. vi. 4, the *Shema*, is Israel's creed, yet not really a creed but a cry: "Hear, Israel; Yahweh our God, Yahweh one!" In the Septuagint this is turned into a sentence by the insertion of *ἕστω*, a natural change from oriental "spirit" to western logic. When some years ago a second century fragment was discovered containing the Hebrew of this verse, it was found to have an inserted predicate, and Dr. Burkitt argued shrewdly that the Massoretic text was more primitive for that reason. Our Revised Version inserted "*is*" in the passage in the Epistle, and the "Two Clerks," who have since made a "strictly conservative" revision of A.V., have done the same.

venture of faith. But next, the venture is never an unreasonable one. It is rather a necessary, unavoidable one. We may put the argument in either of two forms, which are not mutually exclusive. We may say that always, in the midst of an evil world, some have found not merely peace in Christ, but power for service. Or we may say that there is a steady purpose in the world itself. Men do become wiser, kinder, gentler, stronger; they do come closer together and learn to live less and less each for himself; public opinion does become juster, more righteous, more charitable; on the whole the goodness of the world grows. Much of this may be accounted for by our observation of man's wits, by necessities of juxtaposition, and so on. But there always remains something which cannot be accounted for in that way, and this inexplicable remainder answers to those deep movements of conscience in men and nations which govern real peace and joy. To fall back on the inexplicable may argue laziness of thought, but it does not always. The difference between the older and the modern "rationalism" largely consists in the recognition of the inexplicable. In this case we have one inexplicable force answering to another; the spiritual untiredness of the world answering to the conviction of the first generation of disciples that their crucified Lord lived and was exalted and was exalting them. Put the two together and you have the doctrine of the living Christ, the director of this stream of moral progress among the men of whom He was once one and is now the head.

The head; we are slipping into that picture-language which cannot be long avoided. In the picture-language of the Epistle He is the Highpriest bringing us all

to God. The "intercession" He makes for us as High-priest is the whole of this world-movement. But it includes forgiveness, the cleansing of the stains that are incurred in the dangerous process. We see how far from steady the progress is, how often it is contradicted by merely material progress.¹ But we see also a faculty for recovery which assures us of the indissoluble life.

Thus the faith and worship of the Church is not directed merely to her Lord Jesus as He was in the days of His flesh, but to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, yea and for ever, *i.e.* in Him, ever living, exalted, and reigning, is gathered all the Christhood that worked in the world before the Gospel days, all that shone forth during those days, and all that springs up still and shall grow hereafter. All true religion, wherever active, is part of the perfected life of Jesus Christ. Observation of the facts of visible life here shews this manifold growth, but shews it separate, divided, "by divers portions and in divers manners."

¹ The speciousness of material progress has led to mistrust of real progress in the world. This mistrust is impressive in Newman's sermons. Pascal wrote: "La nature de l'homme n'est pas d'aller toujours, elle a ses allées et venues. La fièvre a ses frissons et ses ardeurs; et le froid montre aussi bien la grandeur de l'ardeur de la fièvre que le chaud même. Les inventions des hommes de siècle en siècle vont de même. La bonté et la malice du monde en général en est de même: *plerumque grata principibus vices*" (*Pensées*, ed. Victor Giraud, Paris, 1907, p. 82). But the Port Royal editors gave this: "Les inventions des hommes vont en avançant de siècle en siècle. La bonté et la malice du monde en général reste la même" (Paris, Didot, 1850, p. 307). Pascal makes the true reservation elsewhere (Giraud, p. 108): "La grâce sera toujours dans le monde,—et aussi la nature,—de sorte qu'elle est en quelque sorte naturelle. Et ainsi toujours il y aura des pélagiens, et toujours des catholiques, et toujours combat; parce que la première naissance fait les uns, et la grâce de la seconde naissance fait les autres."

Our faith brings order and unity into the mass. It refers all the parts to the living, sanctifying whole in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the man in God. This Epistle sometimes speaks of Him as ever remaining the same, as being, so to speak, the "idea" perfect in itself, which is gradually unfolded, remembered, realized in the world. That is a mode of expression which modern philosophy does not praise. But the main image of the Epistle is of Jesus Christ as the Highpriest, perfected indeed in His one offering, but perfected for the purpose of continual onward process—ever living to make intercession. If "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, yea for ever" is Platonic idealism in Hebraic guise, the perpetual intercession is "creative evolution," and indeed the arresting interest of this Epistle is the same that we feel in the actual life of religion as we know it in our own battle for holiness, or in the battle that goes on around us. There is creative struggle; it is the forming of the Christ that is to be. In our author's exhortation to his much-tried friends we have looked on at this process of creating part of the Christ. Only it must be still remembered; the light of faith has been thrown by him upon the process, that we may see it with that keen vision of affection which is impossible to the mere psychological observer.

This is really an answer to the question which is sometimes put; may we consider that the sacrifice of the divine Highpriest is in any sense repeated? That it cannot be repeated in the strict sense is plainly asserted in the Epistle; it was "once for all," ix. 26, 28, x. 12. May we then say that it is an "eternal" sacrifice, once offered but evermore continuing? The

phrase in x. 12 might seem to justify that, but the Greek there means, not "eternally" but "in perpetuity," "for the future." It is not the eternity of the sacrifice itself that is meant, but its effect for the future. May we then express that effect in the words which are so commonly used; Christ offered His sacrifice once, and now He pleads it before the Father? Except that the term "plead" is hardly a rendering of any word in the Epistle, out of which alone among the New Testament books we draw our sacrificial language, there seems to be no objection to that; the meaning is the same as in vii. 25, "ever living to make intercession for them," and it is just what we have been drawing out above.

But something besides this has been suggested above, and something perhaps which goes nearer the root of the matter. That intercession is made for men; it is of the essence of the sacrifice that men should join their will with it; and while receiving make its virtue their own. Christ's sacrifice means our union with Him. Now of course, in the strict, verbal sense a sacrifice cannot be repeated. It is an offering, a gift, and that must be given once and cannot be repeated; if it were repeated, that would only mean that the former offering was incomplete, part of the gift was kept back. But the whole sacrificial language is language of figure, and the imagery must serve not dominate. As soon as the sacrifice is thought of as being an act of universal life, it is obvious that in the most real, living sense, it can and must be repeated. S. Paul wrote to the Galatians of Christ being formed in them, as though by a repetition of the Nativity. As naturally does the writer to

the Hebrews bid his friends go forth outside the camp to Jesus, the sacrifice, and join Him there, bearing His shame. The praises and alms He speaks of directly afterwards he calls "sacrifices" (in the plural). He means that they are in Christian worship a substitute for the Levitical sacrifices of the Jews; Christian worship has as good a ritual as the old religion. But he would never use the plural of Christ's sacrifice, nor think of it as a substitute for Levitical rites. It was different altogether, and it was one; it was not divisible into many. What he evidently does want, and he wants it too much to keep to his figured language in urging it, is that his friends should repeat the one sacrifice of their Lord in their own wills, their own obedience to the duty He lays upon them.

That is the sense in which Christ's sacrifice is repeated. It is repeated in each believer when he absolutely offers himself in Christ to God. And if we venture to go beyond this Epistle which is all concerned with the one repetition of the sacrifice by a particular set of men, and think of ourselves and life in general, we may no doubt hope that even offerings of self which are not absolutely thorough are yet real sacrifice in Christ. For the heart of the Christian faith is trust in His completion of our imperfection. But if so, then it seems possible that we may repeat Christ's sacrifice not only (as some are happy enough to do) once for all in our several lives by a "conversion"; but also (as the many must) again and again, as duties press, and we progress, fall back, and are renewed. And so the course of argument leads to the sacrifice we each and all in Christ offer at Holy Communion. For since real worship is not

separated from but is the flower of life, it appears that there, even supremely, this repetition of sacrifice, this unity and reuniting of the will with God's will in Christ takes place. But, as was shewn in a former chapter, this consideration carries us away from our Epistle.

CHAPTER VII

THE COMING OF CHRIST, AND THE DOCTRINE OF LOYALTY

- (i.) Loyalty in the Epistle is an act of imaginative faith made real by the appeal of the crisis, in which the Lord was recognized as coming—This loyalty seems to make against patriotism, but accords with the Gospel ideal of peace. The Epistle adapts that ideal to growing times—With a clearer hope than the *Ezra* and *Baruch Apocalypses* it expects a renewal of the world in the immediate coming of Christ—This is a call to loyalty, which is the romance of faith, and precursor of the “imitation” of Christ—Imitation raises historical and speculative problems which are met by sacramental theology, and the spirit of loyalty in imitation keeps sacramental theology sincere.
- (ii.) Thus Hebrews stands between S. Paul and S. John in the developement of the New Testament—Our Lord concentrated the primitive apocalyptic hope upon His own death. Henceforward faith moved upon the line which starts from the Cross and reaches forward to the *Parousia*—S. Paul deepened the realization of present union with the exalted Christ through His Messianic Spirit. Christ remains for S. Paul the Jewish Messiah, Son of God, divine; but he gives no definite answer to later questions about Godhead—S. Paul’s doctrine of mystical union was hard for less ardent believers. A new trial introduced that idea of union through loyal following of the Lord which is presented in Hebrews, and (with differences) in 1 Peter and the Apocalypse—This was connected with new interest in the days of His flesh, and therefore with new intellectual difficulties—The Epistle meets these difficulties by a first sketch of sacramental theology—That sketch is elaborated in S. John’s Gospel. Union of Hebraic and Hellenistic thought in this Gospel. The author checks tendency to mechanical use of the sacraments; declares the Lord’s truly spiritual presence; refines apocalyptic conceptions; and displays the earthly life of the Lord as instinct with divine glory—The apocalyptic spirit however persists to the last in the Johannine writings.

I.

WE spoke a few pages back of the author’s appeal to the loyalty of his readers towards the Lord. This is a

characteristic point in the theology of the Epistle, which in this, as in other respects, is specially close to the Gospel tradition; it points to the Lord who is to be followed rather than to the Spirit of Christ in whom the believer lives. Yet S. Paul's doctrine has united with the earlier stream. S. Paul has given the mystical idea apart from which there could be no lasting consciousness of the exalted Christ's presence. Touched with that idea the author of this Epistle shapes his simpler, imaginative faith. He returns, as from travel in new lands, to walk with widened recollections in the Galilean "way." In that way the disciples followed their Master visibly. S. Paul passed to mystical union with Him. The writer to the Hebrews fashions a rule of loyalty out of a poetical conception. The value of this fashioning must be measured by its sincerity, by its distance from fancy, and its nearness to sacrament.

This nearness to sacrament is commended to us as probable by the necessity for such a conception at the time when the letter was written; fact and experience did lead the way to it. The approaching trial of the Jewish war with Rome was a call to a simple loyalty to the Lord as a person—a person in a sense which could be understood by plain men. In spite of its academic language, a great part of the letter is devoted to an appeal to the Hellenists it addresses to be true to the plain man's sense of honour. "You have given allegiance to the Lord Jesus as the Christ; no other considerations can over-ride that," is what their friend writes to them. But as a mere recollection of the days of His flesh this loyalty to the Lord was an ineffectual emotion. It was necessary to know Him still present as a captain who

leads, as one whom they could join outside the camp, bearing His shame, and sharing His new hope (xiii. 13-16).

“Still present,” or may we say, “again present?” In the poetry of sacrament the latter image is not too bold. Might not those times of trial be thought of as the season in which God “brings again his first begotten into the world” (i. 6)? The approaching trial, the catastrophe with which it would end—as a shrewd, not to say an inspired observer of the time, could hardly fail to foresee—might not these be in a very real sense the promised *Parousia* of Christ?

It is perhaps a weak point in the apocalyptic school of Gospel critics, that so far they have not found room for our Lord’s political foresight. Was his gaze so simply set on the near advent of the Kingdom of God that He never considered the natural upheaval of society and institutions which the restless insurrectionary zeal of those days promised? May we not follow its own rule about reading the Gospels as they stand, more absolutely than that school as yet permits? May we not accept the whole of the eschatological chapter in S. Mark as our Lord’s own vaticination, and recognize in it, as well as more mysterious things, His clear foreboding of the fall of Jerusalem? And may we not therefore suppose that our Lord himself prepared in His disciples’ minds the interpretation and adaptation of His eschatology which we find them working out in various ways throughout the later part of the New Testament?¹ It is almost

¹ No doubt the reference to Jerusalem is clearer in S. Luke than S. Mark. But it is natural to find it in S. Mark also. Is there not a good deal of truth in what Dr. Mackintosh says? “We must not exaggerate the importance of

impossible to suppose that the belief in the spiritual "coming" of the Lord who had "gone," arose without any germ which He had himself planted. The discourses in the fourth Gospel may be the freest possible reflexion of the evangelist, but it is so much more probable than not that they should be reflexion on something the Lord himself had taught. And more natural still, because more obviously linked with the pictorial transcendental form of the primitive tradition, is the belief that in the siege of Jerusalem the Lord came, and that He had himself taught that it should be so.

At the beginning of this essay we discussed the prevalent opinion of the late date of the Epistle and found reasons for traversing that opinion. The chief reason was the difficulty of accounting for the intensity of the Epistle in a later period, and the ease with which it could be explained if it were written when the Jewish revolt against Rome was beginning, to a small group of friends of like mind and education with the author, who were hesitating to break with their nation, and who felt themselves called in honour to forsake Christ, to adopt unchristian politics, and to take up arms for the old religion. We must of course remember that the author was not mainly engaged—though he was primarily—in talking about this war. It was important to him, for his friends' decision to hold aloof would be the immediate act of faith to which he was urging them. But ultimately he rises above such questions of national obligation to

the question how far the picture of Jesus, furnished by the Synoptics, has been substantially affected by later Christian experience. The possibility of this cannot be denied. But it is only upon the hypothesis that the Christian view of Jesus is mistaken that the incidence of this modifying force would form a legitimate subject of complaint" (*The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 8).

consider the Person and the work of Christ. Hence the references are often casual ones, which except for their frequency might be otherwise explained. Some indeed may have been unconscious ones, but such unconscious references to an oppressive sense of trouble are even specially significant. And there are some—*e.g.* at the end of ch. ix.—which may have been primarily intended in a theological sense; but they have a secondary, ominous ring. Both to us and to the first readers there might be a certain “irony” about them.

It would be tedious to start a second time upon this argument, however possible we believed it to multiply its force. Some suggestions however may be briefly indicated of the author’s belief that this crisis was connected with the expected coming of Christ.

There is, first, the general consolation that runs through the Epistle, that in the “temptation” of those days—the word “temptation” in its full New Testament sense implies the travail pangs of the kingdom’s birth—Jesus Christ will be the stay of His people.

Then there are plain references to the “Second Coming,” of Christ in ix. 28, and to “the day” in x. 25. In each place there are undertones which sound in harmony with approaching events. “A second time shall Christ be seen, apart from sin, by those who are waiting for him, unto salvation.” Was the violence of the Gentiles glanced at in the sin? Was it the quiet in the land that were truly waiting for Him as they held aloof from the strife? Would He be found of them outside the sphere of strife and violence, bringing them spiritual safety? “Let us hold fast the profession of hope unwaveringly, let us consider one another unto

emulation of love and goodly deeds, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, but encouraging one another, and that so much the more as ye see approaching—the day.” Such is the emphatic order of the Greek. There is certainly an allusion to “the day of the Lord,” which here as in the *Didache* (xvi.) is associated with assembly or worship. But the allusion is peculiar, definite; a novel turn is given to the general idea. The readers actually see that day gradually drawing near. Its coming will be in things which are already beginning to happen. The natural meaning of the passage is that in the crisis of the times the author expects to meet his Lord. But he hardly expects it in the form which S. Paul had pictured when he wrote to the Thessalonians or the Corinthians.

In x. 34–39 resemblance is to be noticed to S. Luke’s report of our Lord’s eschatological discourse. The importance of this for our present purpose is that in S. Luke’s report the fall of Jerusalem is so plainly connected with the Coming. In x. 34 there seems almost a reference to our Lord’s words in Lk. xxi. 19 about winning soul or self. And we are not surprised to find that after an exhortation to do God’s will, and a distinct assertion (adapted from ancient prophecy) that the expected Lord will come shortly, the very phrase occurs which the comparison has prepared us for, “we are not of shrinking back unto perdition, but of faith unto the gaining of soul.”

And finally, ch. xii. distinctly contemplates the overthrow of a present order and the coming of a divine kingdom. But it ends on the quiet note of continuous service. It leads on to the assurance of protection

through the approaching trial, and to the appeal to go forth to the Lord Jesus. This is the same expectation as we hear of at the beginning of Acts: "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" But it is the same with a difference. There is no political feeling here, nor is there any eschatological literalism. It is like Lk. xxi., and still more like modern readings of history in the light of the Faith. About the "final" coming little or no doctrine is offered—the needs of the readers did not require it. Of the immediate coming of the Lord there is bold assurance. The Master had said that He might come at even or at midnight or at cock-crowing or in the morning (Mk. xiii. 35). To the writer of this letter the thought has occurred that those hours may be not merely alternative but successive. And now that the first of them has sounded warning he bids his friends be ready.

The occasion of the Epistle seems to be the outbreak of the war with Rome. In that crisis it promises new life, freedom, a reborn world. It speaks of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and of a kingdom to be received.

The closer its details are studied the more reasonable it appears to infer that in the approaching peril of Jerusalem the author found that interpretation of the Church's primitive hope which his own friends and his own day needed.

If so, a certain moral difficulty is presented. The Epistle checks patriotism; but is not patriotism one of the noblest motives of life?

This difficulty recurs throughout the history of the Church. The argument of Celsus cannot seem a bad

one to European nations to-day: "If all men were to do as you do, nothing will prevent the Emperor being left alone and deserted, and all things on earth falling into the power of the most lawless and barbarous savages, with the result that neither of your religion nor of the true wisdom would there be left among men so much as the name." And so he calls on the Christians "to come to the help of the Emperor with all their might and labour with him as right requires, fight on his behalf, take the field with him, if he call on you, and share the command of the legions with him—yes, and be magistrates if need be, and do this for the sake of laws and religion."¹ The obvious comment is that if the Church's refusal in Celsus' day was a menace to the Empire, the exhortation of our author was on the Empire's side, and that he was in fact following the example of the Lord in the Gospels, who was the friend of soldiers, did not denounce war, and bade men render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's. But, though obvious, this does not go deep enough. It is as though one said with M. Loisy that the eighth century prophets of Israel were partisans of Assyria, or Jeremiah (what his contemporaries thought him) a Chaldaizer. It can hardly be denied that in those prophets, and in our Lord's aloofness from politics, and in our author's ideal of rest, there is something which corrects commonplace patriotism, and complicates even the nobler impulse of patriotism. In Fogazzaro's *Piccolo Mondo Antico*, after the tragic death of the little Maria, so tragic because it draws the father and the mother still further apart—

¹ From Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, ch. viii. pp. 256 f.

for a while—Fogazzaro makes these reflexions on the secret thought of the two.

“ He, a Christian, was thinking of an insurrection of wrath and arms against brothers in Christ for the love of a point of earth on one of the smallest of the stars: she was thinking of an immense rebellion, a liberation of the universe. Her thought might be larger, her intellect might appear stronger; but He who is better known in the generations of men as they ascend higher in civilization and in knowledge; He who consents to be honoured by each generation according to its power and who gradually transforms and raises the ideals of the people, employing for his government of the earth, in the fitting time, even the inferior and perishing ideals; He who, being himself Peace and Life, allowed himself to be called the God of Hosts, had impressed the seal of his judgement on the face of the woman and on the face of the man. As the dawn lightened Franco’s face became bright with an inner light, his eyes glowed through his tears with the vigour of life; Luisa’s face grew darker and darker, the shadows sank deeper in her eyes.”

Fogazzaro takes a side here but he recognizes the problem. In this particular case Luisa’s larger thought was not a simply right thought, any more than the final attitude of the Church to patriotism in Italy was simple and self-forgetting; and, on the other hand, the Italian Risorgimento was one of the purest movements of patriotism that the world has seen. Yet an insurrection of wrath and arms against brothers in Christ, and indeed all war, must remain among the inferior and perishing ideals that God uses, so to speak, only in the economy of evolution. And the Gospel, the Sermon on the Mount,

the Cross, belong to that other ideal which we call according to our mood, absolute, divine, impossible, or necessary. It is in fact necessary, for it alone is ideal; and it is the test of a generation whether this ideal has become somewhat less impossible than it was in the last generation. And it is one of the proofs of the—not isolated but pervasive—divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that this ideal, which can be only gradually worked out in our growing world, presents itself in the Synoptic Gospels as natural. In the homely simplicity of that perfectly human, but transfigured world of Palestine ideal hopes are seen predestined.¹

But the Epistle to the Hebrews belongs already to the later stage on which these ideals began to be worked out by adjustment to a wider life; and the author's attitude to Jewish patriotism needs to be justified in that light also. To read the history of the war in Josephus is almost enough to justify him. The patriotism of that movement was—when all allowances are made—fierce

¹ I cannot refrain from adding to what is already too discursive, this quotation from Weigall's romantic history, *The Life and Times of Akhnaton Pharaoh of Egypt*: "Looking back across these thirty-two centuries, can one yet say whether the Pharaoh was in the right, or whether his soldiers were the better-minded? On the one hand there is culture, refinement, love, thought, prayer, good-will, and peace; on the other hand, power, might, health, hardihood, bravery and struggle. One knows that Akhnaton's theories were the more civilized, the more ideal; but is there not a pulse which stirs in sympathy with those who were holding the citadels of Asia? We can give our approval to the ideals of the young king, but we cannot see his empire fall without bitterly blaming him for the disaster. Yet in passing judgement, in calling the boy to account for the loss of Syria, there is the consciousness that above our tribunal sits a judge to whom war must assuredly be abhorrent, and in whose eyes the struggle of the nations must utterly lack its drama. Thus, even now, Akhnaton eludes our criticism, and but raises once more that eternal question which as yet has no answer" (p. 245 f.). This is quoted for the general idea in it; I do not know whether Mr. Weigall's estimate of Akhnaton is justified by history or not. He certainly feels that

and unlovely. The quotation in the Epistle, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," was apt. And this impression is confirmed by two Jewish books which deal with the fall of Jerusalem: the Apocalypse of Baruch, and 2 Esdras, Each of these books is composite. Several pieces have been joined together by a redactor, or—if we prefer to put it in another way—the authors have used various material.¹ The question in each finished book is: what hope for Israel in the future, now that Jerusalem is destroyed? And the answer in each is twofold. On the one hand there is the large hope of the end, of the new age with which earthly politics have nothing to do; on the other there is the hope of vindication in this present world, and the downfall of Rome. But there can be no doubt which hope has produced the finest theology in these books. In both, though perhaps especially in 4 Esdras, the hard, narrowing effect of passion against Rome is evident, and the deepening which came with the other-worldly hope. There is a great difference between that hope and the hope of the Epistle, but nevertheless

Akhmaton stands in what this essay would describe as the sacramental line. But he is very sane in appreciation, and says that, in contrast with the times of this hero, "to-day God is known to us, and the peace of God is a thing hoped for" (p. 228). If not a definition, that sentence is a beautiful indication of Christianity. We must also remember, in considering this problem, that Wordsworth once said to "Almighty God"—

But thy most dreaded instrument
 For working out a pure intent
 Is Man arrayed for mutual slaughter.
 Yea, Carnage is thy daughter.

Cf. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, p. 102. But did not Ezekiel mean the same as Wordsworth when he called the sword one of the LORD's sore judgements?

¹ For 2 Esdras see the discussion in Box's *Ezra Apocalypse*, a treasury of material, and a guide to the study of late Judaism and its relations with Christianity.

they are akin; whereas the prophecy against Rome belongs to another order of faith.”¹

But these Jewish books bring us back to our former question about the date and occasion of Hebrews. They centre upon the fall of Jerusalem, and make it quite clear that it was an all-important event in the religion of those times. But in their final form both, and 2 Esdras in almost all its parts, look back from a certain distance upon the catastrophe. The crisis they meet is the consequence of the fall of the Temple. Is it not possible that our Epistle too is as late as most critics say? May it not still be Jewish Christian; still concerned with the severity of this terrible trial; and yet intended to meet, not the danger which preceded, but the danger which followed it? For the final alienation of the Church from the Synagogue did not come for fifty years or so after the fall of Jerusalem. This is of course perfectly possible. We can only make conjectures from the Epistle itself as to the circumstances out of which it rose, and such conjectures must be uncertain. The reasons for still holding to the earlier date are in the main two. First, the hypothesis of the call to arms fits the Epistle’s

¹ It might be argued that the Apocalypse of S. John corresponds in some degree to the anti-Roman parts of Baruch and Esdras. Thus Hebrews and the Apocalypse would give the twofold Christian consolation, the double Baruch and 2 Esdras the twofold Jewish consolation, in face of the overwhelming power of Rome, whether with special reference to the event of A.D. 70, or with wider reference to subsequent action of that power. If so no slight evidence is involved of the really Christianizing energy of the Gospel. Dr. Swete allows the historical *data* in the Apocalypse full weight, but he can justly sum up its plan and purpose without any notion of bitter feeling in it; “a series of visions arraying themselves under two great actions of which the work of the ascended Christ and the destinies of the Christian Church are the respective subjects . . . it is the movement of great spiritual forces rather than of historical persons and events” (*The Apocalypse of St. John*, p. xxxviii).

intense language better than anything else which we can definitely imagine. And, secondly, there is an air throughout the Epistle of hope new born through expectant dread, of which we are even more sensible, by contrast, when we read 2 Esdras.

The expectant dread would be difficult to account for with the later date, yet circumstances are conceivable in which it might be felt, and if we knew the history of those late years we might find something to take the place satisfactorily of the call to arms. Only it is not enough simply to point to the persecution under Domitian; there must be also a connexion with that Jewish retrospect which, in spite of recent criticism, still impresses most readers of the Epistle. In any case the fall of Jerusalem remains the special impulse, and we may return now to our author's thought that in that trial there was or would be a coming of Christ.

We must say "a coming," rather than "the coming." Mr. J. Stuart Russell in his book *The Parousia*¹ essayed to prove that when our Lord spoke of His *Parousia* He definitely said it would be in the fall of Jerusalem, and that all the references to the *Parousia* in the Epistles and Apocalypse are references to the fall of Jerusalem. But, whatever may be said of the Apocalypse, few would agree that all the Epistles, e.g. 1 John and 2 Peter, were written before Jerusalem fell; and this uncritical treatment of the documents is partly the cause of Mr. Russell's far too fixed dogma about the mysterious hope. What we really find in the New Testament after the Resurrec-

¹ *The Parousia: a Critical Inquiry into the New Testament Doctrine of our Lord's Second Coming*. New ed. Fisher Unwin, 1887. (Original preface dated 1878.)

tion is at first a simple expectation of the speedy coming of the Lord. Then a modification or interpretation of this hope. This proceeds in one direction, as is generally recognized, along the line laid down by S. Paul. In place of the immediate, visible coming there is a spiritual indwelling of the believer in Christ, more often indeed spoken of as a union of the whole family of believers in Christ. This presently develops into a large doctrine of the Church, its wide reach and purpose; this we have in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and it is being accepted more and more generally among critics as S. Paul's own growth in faith. It is perhaps a weakness in Schweitzer's book on S. Paul that he pays little attention to the later Epistles. In another direction we find the thought of Christ's own coming by the Spirit to be with the faithful. This is characteristic of the Johannine writings, and is elaborated in the discourses of the Gospel before the Crucifixion. But the Johannine writings are after, or perhaps with the Apocalypse start from, the fall of Jerusalem, and when we compare Hebrews and the Apocalypse with the eschatological chapters in the Synoptists, and observe how the coming of the Son of Man is there mysteriously linked with the trials of the siege, we feel again that the one set of passages supports and interprets the other, and that it is reasonable to suppose that the Church of the first century did accept these trials as being in a special sense a coming of the Lord. Of late, critics have laid less stress on the fall of Jerusalem in their studies of the apostolic Church, and more on the trial in the reign of Domitian, but if we take A.D. 70 as a mean date for the culminating point of a catastrophe of which the oppression lingered, we may

still say as Renan did¹ that we can feel in reading a New Testament book whether it belongs to the period before or after the fall of Jerusalem. Before, the Church is struggling into settled life; there are disputes between the Jewish and Gentile parties, disputes in which its very being is risked; there are fightings without and fears within. Paulinists are secure in hope by reason of a deeply spiritual conception of life in Christ which is however too spiritual in form for the mass to apprehend. After the fall of Jerusalem there are still dangers, new heresies, and severer persecutions, but Christ is there in a manner all can understand, and no doubt can ever recur as to the abiding life and progress of the Church. With the fall of Jerusalem He had come; if not at once, as Renan might put it, in due sequence all felt this.

This does not mean however that the expectation of what may be called the final coming was lost. On the contrary, the coming of Christ to judge the quick and dead is, with the acknowledgement of God as our Father, and the exercising of all the energy of new life through the Holy Spirit, one of those truths which modern criticism has proved more certainly than ever to have been the foundation of the primitive creed, though they are so difficult for the modern man in an age of material progress to accept.² Yet in the later part of the New Testament there are signs of this belief being held

¹ In *L'Antechrist*, Introd., "Cet événement introduisit dans la situation du judaïsme et du christianisme un tel changement, qu'en discerne facilement un écrit postérieur à la catastrophe de l'an 70 d'un écrit contemporain du troisième temple."

² Cf. Burkitt, *The Limits of Biblical Criticism*, Church Congress, 1908. Dr. Burkitt ends the paper, from which I have borrowed, thus: "The days of purely external authority are gone, and in some ways the Christian path is intellectually darker now than in other ages. But no one can say it looks

in a more thoughtful, less literal manner. It is difficult, for instance, to suppose that the ὅτι ἐάν of 1 Joh. iii. 2, has merely a grammatical interest for the modern reader: "we know that if he shall be manifested (ὅτι ἐάν φανερωθῆ) we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is."¹ And both in Hebrews and in the Apocalypse it is often difficult to decide whether the bold picturesque phrases intend the final coming or that nearer coming in the trial which filled the horizon of the writer and his readers.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus." So, but for the

so dark or so hopeless as when our Lord went on His way to Jerusalem, and told those who would to follow Him if they dared make the venture. If the Christian cause perishes at last, it will not be because historical critics have explained the Gospels away, but because the followers of the Christ are too faint-hearted to walk in the steps of their Master and venture everything for the sake of the kingdom of God."

¹ Brooke pays no special attention in his commentary to this ἐάν, but he expresses what I feel about it very clearly. "The Parousia, which the writer of the Epistle expected, perhaps more eagerly than when he wrote the Gospel, was nevertheless a spiritual fact rather than an apocalyptic display"; "For him the 'Presence' is no sudden unveiling of a man from heaven who in the twinkling of an eye shall destroy the old and set up the new. It is the consummation of a process which is continuously going on. It is the final manifestation of the things that are, and therefore the passing away of all that is phenomenal" (*The Johannine Epistles*, pp. xxi. 37). The emphasis in the verse quoted is on the Johannine word φανερωθῆ—"if we may think of 'manifestation' rather than of 'coming.'" Dr. Brooke says that "the conception of many partial 'comings' has a very important place in the elucidation of the permanent value of the New Testament expectations of the coming of the Christ, but it is not to be found in those expectations themselves" (p. 51). In this essay I venture to suggest that in a certain sense, answering to certain special circumstances, one "partial coming" is recognized in one group of New Testament books. The suggestion does not appear to me to conflict with Dr. Brooke's idea of the development, but I have learned from him that my scheme must be completed by a final stage, in which, at the very end of the apostolic evolution of the doctrine, the aged S. John returns with richer faith to the early simplicity, and "seems to have expected the final manifestation within the remaining years of his own lifetime."

Grace added, ends the Apocalypse, and our New Testament. A magnificent ending. But did the words when first written refer to the end of the world, or to an immediate coming of the Captain whom the seer had beheld at the head of His armies, moving among the mists which shewed and again concealed Him, while the powers of the too present evil world seemed to be gathering all their strength? Or may we say that the power of the words lay then, as it lies now, in their accumulative significance. The ἄπ' ἄρτι, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming," of Mt. xxvi. 64, may be no accurate rendering of a remarkable nuance in the Lord's Aramaic, and yet may be more than a chance felicity of Hellenistic Greek. It may represent a manner of thought in the apostolic Church, some part of which at any rate recognized that the coming of the Lord was to be not merely a perpetual presence, nor yet one speedy or far-off event, but a continuous movement with well-defined seasons¹ in which it could be observed. Is this too modern an idea for those primitive men? Or is it possible that the apostolic age was more akin to modern days in some respects than the centuries which followed it? The Judaism of the first century was larger, finer,

¹ Cf. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, lvii. : "From what has been said, it will appear that when the Apostles ask the Lord, 'Wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?' and He makes answer, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons,' 'the times' (χρόνοι) are in S. Augustine's words, 'ipsa spatia temporum,' and these contemplated merely under the aspect of their duration, over which the Church's history should extend; but 'the seasons' (καιροί) are the joints or articulations in these times, the critical epoch-making periods fore-ordained of God (καιροί προτεταγμένοι, Acts xvii. 26; cf. Augustine, *Conf.* xi. 13: 'Deus operator temporum'); when all that has been slowly, and often without observation, ripening through long ages is mature and comes to the birth in grand decisive

more like the modern Christian Church than it became in its second century stiffening; perhaps something of the same kind happened in the Church also. There are surely signs in considerable variety of such modernism in this Epistle, and throughout the apostolic division of the New Testament there is a joyous hope in the coming age which can with difficulty be explained unless these men believed that the coming of Christ was opening for them a vista of glad service upon this earth.

And here again we may refer to 2 Esdras, and note the contrast between its interpretation of the trial at the end of the first century and the treatment of that trial in this Epistle. In that book the hopes that remain are either the crude hope of vengeance upon Rome, or a hope, religious and beautiful indeed but nigh to despair, of the new age on the utter ruin of this world. In Hebrews, as we would understand it, the hope is of the presence of Christ surrounded by a band of faithful brethren, who shall subdue and transform this broken but redeemed and recovering world. "Not to angels did he make subject the world to come of which we speak;"¹ "Ye have come to mount Sion and the city

events, which constitute at once the close of one period and the commencement of another. Such, for example, was the passing away with a great noise of the old Jewish dispensation . . . such, above all others, the second coming of the Lord in glory (Dan. vii. 22)."

Lancelot Andrewes had already had the same thought, which he turns to exhortation quite in the temper of our author. "So for this great and weighty business there is not only עת but מועד, not only χρόνος but καιρός, not only a time but a set season. Which season is in time as the joint in a member: if you hit on the joint you may easily divide; if on this side or beyond you shall not do it, or not do it so well: therefore to do it when it is." (*Sermons*, i. p. 351).

¹ Archdeacon F. B. Westcott, in a privately printed paper on the Epistle, would interpret this "to come" from the standpoint of Gen. i. To God

of the living God"; "Wherefore taking over as we do a kingdom which cannot be shaken, through which to do well pleasing service to God with reverence and fear, let us shew gratitude"; "Wherefore let us go forth to him outside the camp bearing his shame, for we have not here an abiding city, but are seeking the city that is to be";—these phrases do not indeed shut out a final hope of consummation, but on the other hand they do not simply point to a "new world" into which "the righteous will pass through the resurrection."¹

The only key to the apparent confusion in the Epistle between present and future, the immediate and the far-off hope, is the recognition of the author's faith not only in the consummation of all things, but also in the immediate coming of Christ in the trial of those days. And he holds this nearer faith not as a speculation but as a practical call to loyalty.

In this as in so much else he carries us back to the mind of the disciples in Galilee. Conspicuous in the Gospel story are those passages in which the loyalty, often the blind loyalty, of the disciples is described. The Gospels begin and end with "following." The denial of S. Peter is not so wonderful as his having gone to the high priest's house at all; women are following to Calvary; a Rabbi buries the crucified Lord. And if it is in the fourth Gospel that this loyalty is so to speak underlined, it is surely the perversity of historical caution to under-

creating, this world was to come; to man who dwells in it, it is present. This seems to me one of those explanations which might suit the Epistle if it were a treatise of theology, but are unlikely if it was a letter written to meet an imminent upheaval. Cf. *The Epistle to the Hebrews, an Experiment in Conservative Revision*, Appendix, p. 37.

¹ R. H. Charles in *Enc. Biblica*, art. "Eschatology," § 5.

value that touch of sympathy, however achieved. S. Thomas' "Let us also go that we may die with him," may have phrased itself perhaps in a dramatic memory, but it helps dull imaginations to understand the rare and loving perseverance with which a few trustful men left their livelihood and tramped the roads and mountains, and went off two by two on an adventurous errand at their Master's mere command, and ventured with Him into Jerusalem though He had told them His doom, and believed Him when He accepted the title of Messiah, and after a fearful disappointment trusted Him again when He shewed himself living in a resurrection which must have been far harder for the immediate witnesses to accept as proved, than it is for us who read of it with ample leisure to weigh, consider, and compare. The resurrection, the gift of the Spirit, the apostolic prayers and breaking of the bread, are all spiritual realities, which can only find full expression through natural channels. It is a commonplace to observe how the Apostles who had received the Holy Spirit were far stronger than the same men had shewn themselves in the visible presence of their Lord. But the operation of the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from the training they had received, and the basis of the apostolic character, as we see it in the Acts, is the same as had already been laid in the Gospels; it was the loyalty of faithful servants to Him whom they style above all else their Lord. And it is to just that simplicity of loyal faithfulness that this author makes his repeated appeal. "Hold fast your profession"; "Go forth to him without the camp"; "Wait for him"; "Bear his shame"; "No drawing back"; "He is for you Christ however much or

little you understand"; "To take part with those who crucify him—impossible for you!" Such are the brave notes which go resounding through this Epistle and make it a favourite even with simple minds that hardly trouble to follow its argument.

And it is such notes especially which deepen its importance in these days of ours. For one cause or another we can to-day sympathize only too well with the imperfect Christianity and still more with the imperfect churchmanship of those first readers. Happily there are also reasons which enable many to appreciate the Christological arguments of the author with peculiar readiness. But what is needed to-day above all is the sense of loyalty as a nobler thing than the mere assurance of the intellect. A doubt need not be the same thing as a denial. It is modest to hold to the faith one has received. Christianity is a life and a service. The believer is more like a soldier than a philosopher. Some of the finest spirits of the last generation denied themselves honour, emoluments, the happiness of fellowship, for the sake of intellectual honesty. They were martyrs, and as we read the rôle of the heroes of faith in this Epistle we silently add to them honoured names that were held scarce Christian in their own days, but whom we now believe to have gone forth to the Lord of truth himself outside the camp. And what they ventured has not been ventured in vain. We know now that some of the truths they suffered for were part of the true creed all the time. Others were but half-truths and already we perceive the reconciliation of some of the contradictions which perplexed them. Anyhow they have won for the Church a spirit of tolerance, patience, teachable-

ness. And the venture of this younger generation is not to be intellectual rebellion, but intellectual patience, modesty and progress on the basis of active service, obedience, loyalty. What was noble in them may be conceit in us. Their lot was the austerity of science for the few distinguished minds, our lot is the romance of loyal obedience to the Master whom we think of less philosophically, but picture as present with us by a sacramental act of feeling.

For feeling is no longer the opprobrious term that it was a generation ago. Feeling, instinct, intuition are coming out of the margin into the text. There seems to be a scientific justification for this movement, but it is interesting to notice how the Gospels, and indeed the whole of the Scriptures, fit in with it. When our Lord bade us call God our Father, when Israel called Him Jahveh, Jahveh of Hosts, and besought Him to stretch forth His arm, to shew the light of His countenance, to come down, feeling or intuition was at work. And the importance of it was, just as the modern philosopher says it should be, that this feeling brought all into touch with life. The author of Hebrews has the same conviction when he reiterates his phrase "the living God," or writes that God "was not ashamed to be surnamed their God." And so again in this conviction of his that the Lord is coming in the approaching trial, we recognize the same impulse at work. It is, or at least it seems to be, more consonant with sober reason to postulate a heavenly sphere beyond the limitations of sense, in which the risen Christ lives eternal life, and in which His faithful enjoy communion with Him in spiritual mode transcending space and time, than to imagine Him as

present though invisible amid earthly conditions at a particular time and place. Yet as soon as emotion is allowed to count there is much to be said for this imaginative conception as being in its own way not less true. For it is at particular times and places that duty has to be done, and duty, in the true language of romantic religion, is the following of Christ.

The following of Christ, or the "imitation" of Christ. This conception of relationship to Him in part produces, and in part itself springs from, augmented interest in the days of His flesh. It means that the Lord Jesus as He once lived on earth is accepted as a pattern, and His commands are heard and understood by later generations through their memory of His leadership then. It does not belong to the first impulse of the faith; though it seems the simplest, it is (like other simplicities) the outcome of accumulated experience, and generally appears when some strong cause from without has compelled thought to fuse its complexities in action. Harnack in his *Mission and Expansion of Christianity* (i. p. 88, note) says that "to imitate" or "be like" Christ "did not occupy the place one would expect among the ethical counsels of the (earliest) age . . . in the early church the imitation of Christ never became a formal principle of ethics (to use a modern phrase) except for the virtuoso in religion, the ecclesiastic, the teacher, the ascetic, or the martyr . . . even the injunction to be like Christ, in the strict sense, occurs comparatively seldom . . . for one thing, the Christology stood in the way . . . for another, the literal details of imitation seemed too severe. Those who made the attempt were always classed as Christians of a higher order, though even at

this early period they were warned against presumption." Thus we hear S. Ignatius praying that he may "begin to be a disciple" when he goes to martyrdom, "flying to the Gospel as to the flesh of Jesus."

Yet this thought of "imitation" is part of the New Testament faith. Whenever our Lord was recognized, in the early mission preaching "as Messiah, as the Son of God, as Saviour, and as Judge, the ideas of imitation and likeness had to give way, although," to quote Harnack again, "the apostles still continued to urge both in their Epistles, and to hold up the mind, the labours, and the sufferings of Jesus as an example." Yet even in the New Testament these two aspects of His Lordship are presented by the different writers in varying proportions, and it is the Epistle to the Hebrews which may be regarded as the precursor of S. Bernard, S. Francis, the Jesuits, perhaps even of the Synoptic Gospels themselves, in this offering of Jesus the Master and Example even to ordinary Christians.

The author indeed did not (as it would seem) do this for the mass of believers, but for certain men who stood rather apart with special opportunities and special perplexities—men who had their share in worldly wit and worldly honour, and who were faced by a trial to faith which could be better met by soldierly obedience than by prolonging their philosophical discussions. We see, if the comparison may be allowed again, so much the same situation imagined by Shorthouse in *John Inglesant*: a delicate, well-bred, learned mind; a time of civil war when duty is not clear; an acceptance of the Jesuit theology of the imitation of Christ, partly in providential preparation for, partly in consequence of, the per-

plexities of the crisis; and then (most important of all) this idea of imitation becomes itself confused and uncertain as it deepens, but issues at last in new simplicity through a discipline which becomes severer while it appears to become vaguer. The faith which the writer to the Hebrews would instil into his friends, and would have them hold the firmer because the heavenly as well as the earthly things are about to be shaken, is seen (in the small field of this romance) illustrated in the loyalty of the Christian cavalier, lifted through the chastisement of his honour towards his earthly king to a straiter following of his heavenly king. A commentary upon this kind of Christianity may be seen in S. Stephen's Church at S. Albans, where *Veniet Rex* has been cut in the stone of one of the pillars. The story goes that it was cut by an officer in the Royalist army, who passed a night there as a prisoner after a defeat.

Two reflections remain to be made upon all this. First, that the loyalty of imitation, strictly understood, requires a critical study of the days of the flesh. Difficulties arise which provoke such study, and the study itself seems at first sight only to increase the difficulty; so arduous a task it is to discover the very features of the exemplar, and still more arduous to copy them when they are more exactly known. This Epistle is an early example of such study, undertaken because of difficulties already felt. The result was to accentuate the difficulties when the humiliation of the real Jesus of Nazareth was made plainly visible. The final outcome was a piece of creative theology which reconciled the contradictions by a sacramental theory of life in general, and by a practical appeal to imitate the Lord in a particular act of loyalty

which the troubles of the day shewed to be needed. In the imaginary field of romance we can trace just the same threefold process in *John Inglesant*. In our own day two stages have been passed through already. Various difficulties, more or less vaguely felt, have produced a more and more exact criticism of the Gospels. That has discovered what seems to be the most accurate portrait of the Lord as He lived on earth which later generations have ever known. It seems to be so to us. Of course our own eyes are dimmed by the mists of our contemporary prejudices, and generations yet to come will find much to correct in the portrait now shewn to us. But there it is, and it brings a fresh set of difficulties with it; we had not realized how startling the limitations of such a life would be, nor how different its whole environment from our own. "Imitation" seems impossible. The reconciliation is still to come. This essay is but an echo of the voices which are heard to-day around us, and it may be that what that echo repeats shall prove part of the reconciliation. An honest sacramental theory may shew that sublimity only comes by limitation, and that recognition of real manhood is the truest way to faith in real Godhead. Again, a cure and not a shelving of intellectual difficulties may be found in a simpler spirit of loyalty; a loyal following may be discerned as a quite possible though not an exact "imitation." And—though here prophecy is shut out—this Epistle would bid us expect and be ready for some particular opportunity, some "trial," which shall make the path of loyalty plain. The Christ we follow is ἀρχηγός, a Captain; His imitation is mediated; as S. Paul said to the Corinthians, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ."

And secondly (as the reference just made to S. Paul's "imitation" suggests), in the New Testament pre-eminently, and in the history of the Church in varying degrees, we find the philosopher and the sacramentalist, the champion of instinctive loyalty and the searcher of the deep things of the Spirit, never isolated in their own peculiarity. One saint leans in this direction, one in that, but each shares in the mind of the other. Every one knows how Dr. Bigg brought this out in the introduction to his commentary on the Epistles of S. Peter and S. Jude, and more lately Baron von Hügel in *The Mystical Element of Religion*, with his three types, the institutional, the intellectual, and the mystical. No analysis of the mind of mankind can be exhaustive, and perhaps there is another type which is not precisely the same as any these authors notice. Is there not also what may be called the scholar's mind; one that watches the enthusiasms of the others from outside, and looks on at the stream of life, and sometimes leaves such narratives as S. Luke's to trouble the schemes of later historians who have taken one side or another in the period they are studying? One reason against accepting S. Luke as author of Hebrews is that the man who wrote this Epistle had such a very different mind from that. And yet he too has his scholarship, and S. Luke too is a friend of the poor and is by no means cold to other enthusiasms also. Brother needs to share with brother or no faith is strong enough to stand; type must be fortified by contact with other types. That, as Baron von Hügel shews, is found in the experience of all saints; it appears more clearly still in the New Testament, but the perfect synthesis is only in the Synoptic Gospels. "Tout

S/ auteur a un sens auquel tous les passages contraires s'accordent, ou il n' a point de sens du tout . . . il faut donc en chercher un qui accorde toutes les contrariétés . . . mais en Jésus-Christ toutes les contradictions sont accordées" (Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Giraud, p. 142).

II.

At this point we are already able to go back to what was but indicated at the beginning of this essay, and to shew that Hebrews does represent a developement in the interpretation of the apostolic tradition. That tradition, with its high doctrine of the Person and work of Christ, is its starting-point. The author does not make a new doctrine ; he leads his friends onward to a full acceptance of the old, unchanging doctrine of the Church. But he gives them the particular interpretation of it which their character and circumstances require. This is what S. Paul and S. John have done or are still to do in their time and place, and these successive interpretations form a connected series, in which this Epistle has its own position, its relationship to what goes before and after.

The primitive Gospel was apocalyptic. The Lord's own proclamation was that the expected Kingdom of God was at hand, His moral teaching was a call to the repentance which converted the wills of men to the will of God. Behind this particular apocalyptic temper there was no doubt much of that more sober, universal faith, which is commonly called the prophetic, which Mr. Hart calls Catholic Judaism, and which was really wider, and in our Lord's mind deeper, than either of

those names define it—a steady, unifying reasonableness, which cynics call “the religion of all sensible men,” and Ewald called “the true religion.” But this was only the *eau souterraine*, the energy of the Gospel was apocalyptic. Apocalyptic however in no hard, unalterable form, but by creative Spirit inspiring the creative action of our Lord upon its own material. To Him the apocalyptic hope of all the world, and the whole will of the Father, was concentrated upon His own death. He reformed the Jewish faith by awaking its heart in the heroic love of its crucified Messiah.¹ Henceforth the true faith moved with clear purpose along the line of life which started from the Cross and reached forward to the *Parousia*. The death of Jesus had gathered up all the hope of the old world and taken away the evil of it. The Resurrection had proved the Messianic reality of that death, and the hope that had now arisen was perfectly simple and satisfying; Jesus who died would do what He had promised, He would come as Jesus Christ with the Kingdom of God.²

In the opening chapters of the Acts we see the little Jewish church living in Jerusalem in that hope. It is simply waiting. It is pure, sinless—the first offence at once stamped out—unworldly. It believes in the forgiveness of sins and in its hope, but has no more elaborate theology. It *does* nothing; the outside world is let alone. It takes no thought for the morrow, nor for the heathen, but leaves all in the hands of God. Thus begins that vanishing away of the Jewish-Christian

¹ *The Hope of Catholic Judaism: an Essay Towards Orientation*, by J. H. A. Hart (Parker, 1910).

² Cf. Hamilton, *The People of God*, i. p. vi. I hope I have not spoiled Dr. Hamilton's very impressive thought by this paraphrase.

Church which Dr. Scott Holland has described as "The tragedy of the Acts."¹

Then into that quiet society burst S. Paul like a firebrand, requiring the admission of the Gentiles, and gaining his point. With the admission of the Gentiles new problems arose. To some extent at least those Oriental-Hellenic influences, which were afterwards to come to the front, were already felt in S. Paul's churches. But he appears in his letters as directing and largely even checking these. Education at Tarsus would not change the strongly marked religious character of an apocalyptically minded Jew. And such was S. Paul. The "modernizing" touches of sympathy in his writings are not inconsistent with that estimate; the apocalyptic strain that runs throughout, and the quite definitely apocalyptic language which is frequent, cannot be explained except on that estimate. The sacraments to him are sacraments of hope, anticipations of the new creation, shewing forth the Lord's death until He come. The salvation wrought by His death stands in need of no explanation such as modern readers now in one way now in another search for. It is the expected acts of God in His age-long purpose of salvation; it stands not by itself but in its destined place in the divine, world-wide vindication of righteousness, which was mercy and life for the people of God. And that, because Jesus was proved Messiah and Son of God by the resurrection; the Messianic claim granted, the rest was what had already been expected. Thus what has

¹ In this paragraph and the beginning of the next I am drawing upon recollections of a lecture of Dr. Scott Holland's. I do not know whether he has published it.

sometimes appeared arbitrary in S. Paul's doctrine of the atonement is seen to be, at least to him, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, perfectly consecutive. To us the difficulty remains that S. Paul's conception is "supernatural," but even that is lessened by sympathetic study of the apocalyptic thought. Not "supernatural" but "mystical" is the relationship in that sphere of ideas, and our difficulty in accepting S. Paul's doctrine of the atonement is more akin to our difficulty in accepting our Lord's ideal morality of finding life by losing it, than to our difficulty about the historical evidence for miracles.

And in accordance with that mystical bent we find that S. Paul's great contribution to the Church's faith so far is his intense realization of (what was no doubt in more commonplace measure the faith of all) the believer's present union with the exalted Christ by the might of His Spirit. As the Christ now in heaven, and presently to come, is endowed with the Spirit of God, so His brethren on earth who expect His coming are endowed with the same Spirit. They are lifted thereby to Him where He is; their lives are already hid with Him in God. So far there is a conflict between their real inner life and the present evil world that presses round them. But the anticipation is more than hope, it is the Messianic peace already victorious in the Messianic family. Without are strifes, within are fears, but the Spirit in them says Abba, Father, and they enjoy the trustfulness of the Son of God. All this is really Judaism, only completed by acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. If development, it is natural, indeed inevitable, development of doctrine. There is no change, no novelty. The Trinitarian doctrine is still Hebraic. The Holy Spirit is personal,

but that was just what a Jew could understand more easily than a Christian of later days. In later days "spirit" has come to be used as a highly abstract term, for "influence," sometimes for little more than "temper."¹ But the Spirit of God in the Old Testament leaps upon Saul, possesses prophets, and suggests continually just what the later dogma attempts to express. And S. Paul's doctrine of Christ should be noted in comparison both with what precedes and what follows it. In the Synoptic Gospels we have the picture of our Lord as He lived, a man among men, in Galilee and Jerusalem. There is something more which is at last accounted for, though we would not presume to say explained, when S. Peter confessed Him to be the Christ. That is, S. Peter confessed Him to be that divine Person, Son of God, who would come in the appointed season, as King in the Kingdom of God. The Apostles knew Him as man; they looked for Him to be revealed in heavenly glory. S. Paul takes up this faith one stage further on. Whatever be the precise intention of his words in 2 Cor. v. 16, "If we have even known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know no longer," it is evident that the days of His flesh are not what he lays stress upon. He guards the manhood of Christ chiefly by entitling Him "Christ (still) crucified," and proclaims Him as exalted in heaven, expected to come. He knows Him as Son of God, as divine in a truer sense than any ancient Apocalypse describes the Christ, yet he never says anything so definite about His "Godhead" as S. John's prologue does, nor has he any outburst of devotional reverence parallel to—what seems so natural

¹ Cf. Kirsopp Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of S. Paul*, pp. 202 f.

when it is taken as an outburst of emotion—S. Thomas' "My Lord and my God."¹ This does not imply that S. Paul in any way witnesses against the full Catholic faith. It only means that some questions which were afterwards asked had not yet been asked in his day or in his circle. In what might be called "energy" his doctrine of Christ is as high as any that was afterwards formulated; it is to the philosophical problem of "substance" that he contributed nothing. And as in the Old Testament we are accustomed to recognize the several prophets telling one thing at a time concerning the nature of God and His dealings with men, so in the New Testament also we ought to recognize that the doctrine of Christ is unfolded through the answers given to successive questions by the several apostolic writers.² It is from the whole New Testament that the whole Catholic doctrine is drawn.

¹ An exception will at once be remembered in Rom. ix. 5. Some commentators avoid the difficulty by putting a stop before the last clause, thus making it a doxology of God the Father. Others think that the absence of the article before *θεός* makes an important difference. Nearly all recognize that there is something startling in the passage, which needs reconciliation with S. Paul's other language. Mr. Hart's conjectural emendation is so slight, and gives such consistency to the series of relative clauses in the passage itself, that it is at least tempting to accept it. He would read *ὦν ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων θεός*—"who are Israelites, whose are the adoption, etc., whose are the fathers, from whom is the Christ, whose own is He that is over all God blessed for ever" (*The Hope of Catholic Judaism*, pp. 57 f.).

The passages in the Pastorals, 2 Tim. iv. 1 (*τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ*), Tit. ii. 13 (*τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*) might also be cited as exceptions (cf. 2 Pet. i. 1), but it is not necessary in these phrases to take both nouns under the one article. If they were so taken, it would be an argument against direct Pauline authorship; if Pauline authorship be allowed, that would be a reason for taking the nouns apart.

² Cf. Luther: "The Scriptures begin very gently, and lead us on to Christ as to a man, and then to one who is Lord over all creatures, and after that to one who is God." Quoted by Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 232.

So far then we have the synoptic history and St. Paul's epistles dominated by a simple apocalyptic expectation, and representing our Lord first as a man on earth who will come as Messiah, then as the Messiah in heaven pre-existent and divine, who is expected by His Church and in whom they already "live proleptically" in the Kingdom. The divine work of Christ is intensely conceived, but no clear account has as yet been suggested of the union of manhood and Godhead in His Person. The simple apocalyptic expectation is dominant in S. Paul from first to last.¹ But in his long ministry there was no doubt some progress in his thought about these subjects. The delay of the expected *Parousia*, the controlling of foreign tendencies, intellectual or ritual, in his Gentile converts, the statesmanship required in ruling the churches,—all this prepared for the vision of the one Church growing up, through possibly long ages in the future, that at least flashed across his brain in imperial Rome. His faith did not stand still, nor did the faith of the Churches who looked to him and in whose fellowship he himself was being educated. There was a forward moving thought, a forward moving devotion towards Christ. If the Pastorals be included in the Pauline letters they would be in some points an indication of this movement. The difficulty about including them is that their spiritual insight seems—not everywhere but in some places—inferior to S. Paul's.

¹ In the Pastorals the apocalyptic expressions are sometimes even more striking than in the other epistles of the Pauline collection, where the Apostle's passionate and at the same time intellectual devotion always deepens and complicates the simple tradition—as our Lord had already done in a different style. The double phenomenon allows no facile inference as to authorship.

We can imagine a country labourer, simply but deeply imbued with the mind of S. Paul, passing from Romans to these Epistles, and saying, "This is not the Paul I know." They give us the impression of Pauline fragments collected and edited by some more ordinary churchman of the Pauline age. And if that were possible, they would be evidence for what is in itself so likely, the difficulty experienced by the mass of Christians, when the first vigour of conversion died down, in grasping S. Paul's consciousness of union in Christ by the Spirit. That vigour was renewed by a fresh conception of the believer's relationship to Christ, brought in by a fresh kind of trial, a fresh claim of duty.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews little is said of the Holy Spirit as effecting union with Christ.¹ That union is here based upon the ancient Jewish conception of the Christ in whom the people of God are partakers. It is to be realized by the men to whom the letter is written through their loyalty to Jesus Christ their Lord. A crisis of trial is imminent. In that crisis He is "coming," and when He comes He claims the steadfast

¹ Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 336, refers to E. A. Abbott, *The Message of the Son of Man*, "for a striking argument that the Epistle to the Hebrews takes the same line" as S. Paul—"the believer has so lived himself by faith into Christ's personal being that old things have passed away, and all things—including and centring in his old self—have become new." Such is certainly the "rest of God" into which the author has entered, and into which he desires to bring his friends. But his "line" is a special one, conditioned by special circumstances. He expresses the union in terms of "will." The losing and finding of will, which is the union, shall be achieved in the doing of a particular duty. In each case there is surrender. But while S. Paul says, "We are one with Christ; His love constrains us," and says it to Christians generally; this author says, "Follow Christ and you shall know what being one with Him means; loyalty to the Lord Jesus constrains you," and he says it to a group of men in special circumstances,

allegiance of His followers. A new stage has been reached in the interpretation of the primitive apocalyptic hope. The final "coming" is still of course the consummation of the Church's hope. But for the author and his friends that is for the moment of less importance than this immediate coming in which their duty is involved. The Lord had said He would come in such a trial as theirs. That trial is at hand; their business is to take no thought for the (perhaps distant) morrow, but to be ready and loyal "to-day." Christ therefore is conceived not present so much in spiritual mode such as transcends the limitations of time and space, and makes the believer's life a living already in the heavenly sphere, as about to be present in the manner of a leader, in a manner which imagination realizes, and realizes more intensely the more it postulates a likeness to the ordinary conditions of earthly movement. It is not a philosophical, it is a romantic conception.

Such a conception naturally brings with it a new interest in the Lord Jesus as He did move on earth in the conditions of manhood. But as soon as that interest is indulged, those conditions are found to be limitations. There may have been other reasons also for turning attention to the days of His flesh at this time, but in any case the point is that attention so turned brought into view all the difficulties which the limitations of the Lord's manhood put in the way of faith. The Alexandrine Platonism of the author and his friends suggested an excellent answer to these difficulties. The doctrine of Platonic ideas is a sacramental doctrine. He therefore adopted the sacramental method. He applied it especially to the humiliation, suffering and death of Christ

but he also gave a first sketch of the sacramental interpretation of the whole Person and work of the Christ; a first sketch which S. John was presently to elaborate in his Gospel. In the Epistle this sacramental principle is but sketched. It is half concealed by the liturgical imagery of the Highpriesthood which is employed to make it interesting and intelligible. But it is a step forward in the exposition of the Person of Christ. As we read this Epistle we feel that no vague terms of Christhood will ever again satisfy the thoughtful worshipper of the Lord Jesus Christ. Godhead and manhood are here brought together in full significance, and if the sacramental view of their unbroken unity is not a philosophical explanation, it is not the less convincing to one who has been carried away by the pictorial vigour and the moral earnestness of the letter. The power of the sacramental theology is just that; it is not a proof, but it is a *theoria*, a view of life as a whole, and it is an appeal to natural affection, to loyalty; it is wonder and romance in religion.

Two other books of the New Testament may be classed with Hebrews, viz. 1 Peter and the Apocalypse of S. John. Their dates and occasions may be more or less far removed. They are in some respects very different. But they too shew interest in the days of the flesh, in liturgical imagery, and in a "coming" of Christ which is connected with a season of trial. And in them too the appeal is made to be loyal to Jesus Christ who comes to help in time of need, and who satisfies human affection and demands faithful following, in a time of mutual need—there must be no crucifying of Him afresh; He is ready to be revealed

in a season of extremity,¹ The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.

Hebrews gives, in sketch, a sacramental view of the full Godhead and full manhood of Jesus Christ. That view excludes henceforth any such "confusion" as might be implied in a term like "Heavenly Being,"² or carried out into Arianism. In Hebrews we have but a first sketch, though it has the frankness and simplicity of the sketch, a frankness and simplicity which no afterwards elaborated work can rival. That elaborated work is given in S. John's Gospel, where the earthly life of the Lord is recounted at length, and with just that aim, to shew the heavenly through the earthly, the Godhead through the manhood. The measure of the advance may be appreciated if the prologue to the Gospel be set side by side with the opening of the Epistle, as is done in the Church's Christmas Day worship. In the Gospel we recognize the new sacramental language, perfectly

¹ 1 Pet. i. 5, σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ. So Hort renders the phrase in his fragmentary commentary on the Epistle. It is one of many in this Epistle, in which (as in Hebrews) what seems at first sight to refer to "the last day," proves capable of application to a present or imminent season of trial. In Apoc. i. 10, ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ surely does refer (as Hort preferred, though Swete thinks it alien to the context) to the Lord's great day, the day of the coming of the Kingdom. But the Apocalypse was plainly occasioned by some immediate trial; whether or no that trial is conceived as the beginning of the end itself, depends on the extension which is allowed to the symbolic language of the Book; but in any case the Apocalypse is a λόγος παρακλήσεως, welcoming Jesus Christ who "comes quickly."

² Cf. Schweitzer, *Paulinischen Forschung*, vii. p. 174: "Der paulinische Christus aber, wenn er auch Gottes Sohn genannt wird, ist nicht Gott, sondern nur ein himmlisches Wesen." To the sympathetic reader this is unobjectionable, but it must be remembered that it is but a summary in very unapostolic terms of S. Paul's doctrine. S. Paul himself could say, in its context, ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, but he could not have summed up his idea of Christ in such a phrase as "a heavenly Being."

mastered and used with practised simplicity. In the Epistle we have magnificent philosophical language which nevertheless is still clothing the older, more Jewish idea. The Epistle starts from the Christ, the Son of God who was to come, and proceeds to the man Jesus whose humiliation reveals His glory, whose manhood is the sacrament of His Godhead. The Gospel starts from "the Word made flesh," and proceeds to illustrate that truth by a "life of Jesus," very simply told. In the Epistle the doctrine is seen bursting through its early mould by the help of Alexandrine language; in the Gospel it is already free from the primitive mould and is easily expressed in a narrative told in the simple language that a Jew might use who had enjoyed no training in philosophy or rhetoric, but had lived for many years in an Asiatic Greek city.

That might serve as a description of the origin of S. John's Gospel, however freely we interpret the tradition that he was, not the writer, but the author, of it. There are difficulties in even a free interpretation of that tradition, but it is not necessary for our purpose to discuss them. It is worth noticing that the Greek element in the Gospel may have been sometimes exaggerated.¹ There is Greek thought in it, but it plays upon a Hebraic ground. The sacraments have

¹Dr. Burkitt writes ("A New MS. of the Odes of Solomon," *JTS*, April 1912), "Like the Fourth Gospel, the religion of the Odes may be described as the Greek Mystery-religion, transfigured by the historical event of the Incarnation, an event which brought the life-giving *πνεῦμα* to men and thereby gave them salvation and a foretaste of apotheosis." Every one must recognize the insight of the last lines in which so much is gathered into so brief a space, but surely the first lines are an exaggeration. The Mystery-religion does not shape the Gospel, but the Gospel controls while it accepts the influence of Mystery-religion upon the original Hebraic faith.

by this time become the centre of Church life.¹ They express the Church's consciousness of Christ's perpetual presence, and doubtless there is already a tendency to use them in too mechanical a fashion. S. John, like S. Paul, checks and directs the tendency of his day. He shews the truly spiritual character of the two sacraments by the discourses on the New Birth and on the Bread of Life. He explains at large the truly spiritual nature of Christ's presence by the discourse at the Last Supper. Again, as in S. Paul's teaching, the Spirit is prominent, but now the Spirit does not lift the believers into the future Kingdom; through the Spirit the Lord "comes" and dwells in the Church. In S. Paul the Spirit is a fire burning upwards and carrying him to Christ in heaven; in S. John the Spirit is a lantern

Dr. Abbott's description seems to fit the author of the Odes, and to give at least a hint for an estimate of the Gospel: "A Jewish Christian, writing in the first century, under the influence of Palestinian poetry, Alexandrian allegory, Egyptian mysticism, and—most powerful of all—the influence of the Spirit of Love and Sonship, freshly working in the Christian Church, at a time when Jesus was passionately felt to be the Son revealing the Father through such a love as the world had never yet known; but before the doctrine of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit had begun to be hardened by controversial iteration into a dogma accepted by the lips of almost all Christians, including many that did not feel the beauty and necessity of the doctrine in their hearts" (*Light on the Gospel from an Ancient Poet*, p. xxix).

The most striking contrast between the Odes of Solomon and the Johannine writings seems to me to be the absence of apocalyptic feeling in the Odes; whereas in S. John I expect to find that strange and antique Hebraic spirit more and more recognized as the Gospel and Epistle are more studied in the unprejudiced manner to which we have lately become used in the study of the Synoptists and S. Paul. If the Odes really do come from the first century, their affinity with "liberal" rather than with "apocalyptic" Christianity is remarkable. The Odes would stand to S. John in something like the same relation as Mr. Streeter thinks Q stands to S. Mark and S. Matthew, cf. *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, Appendix.

¹ Cf. Kirsopp Lake, *Earlier Epistles of S. Paul*, p. 45.

unto the feet, and a light unto the paths of men. The older apocalyptic language is not rejected, but it receives a subtle interpretation, as in ch. v., where the disciples are bidden not to marvel at the naïve expression of the truth of the resurrection and judgement to come, but at the same time an application of that truth is made to the present life which the Son of God renders even now eternal life. But the large meaning of this Gospel is not found in isolated passages. It is grasped by reading the whole story of the human life of Jesus on earth, which, as the evangelist looks back upon it, appears instinct with divine glory. There is to him no way to be compared with that for understanding the divine glory; through the manhood, and through the manhood only, can men apprehend it.

We are apt to object that in this Gospel the manhood is not, in fact, sufficiently shewn as real manhood. It is true that the fresh naturalness of the Synoptists could never be repeated; it is also true that the bold, frank touches of the sketch in Hebrews were impossible in this elaborate, reflective portraiture. It is a growth, with the necessarily accompanying loss, in art rather than a change in theology. But this difference too may be exaggerated. It is not felt by uninstructed readers but by critics, and critics feel it for this reason among others, that they are obsessed by the problem of miracle. That problem, like all critical problems, must be faced, but it should also be remembered that the evangelist is not at all likely to have been obsessed by it. If we could read his Gospel in the spirit in which he wrote it, we should pass lightly over many things which trouble our reading to-day, and we should sympathize more with that wondering awe at

the divine possibilities involved in human life, which he felt, and which all reverent students of the theology of Christ's Person have felt since he led the way in their studies.¹ That is what he is expressing in this life of the divine Jesus.

The authoritative utterances take on a theological colour from his reflections; the miracles may be narrated as the Apostle told them, or as his scribe had heard them told in the church at Ephesus. We do not know what influences shaped these details of the composition, any more than we know—apart from his telling—what the miraculous actions exactly were from which the evangelist's record starts. But we shall not use the Gospel happily or well, unless we are content to acknowledge that critical obscurity and pass it by; to recognize that this evangelist writes in simple good faith, and that his childlike simplicity is as beautiful as his deep insight; and that both simplicity and insight are due to what we may term inspiration in a more absolute sense than has perhaps been fashionable of late—he thought, he trusted, he

¹ This sense of the greatness, beauty, and peace, of Christological study is what characterizes Dr. Mackintosh's book, *The Person of Jesus Christ*. It would be impertinent to praise its excellence in those qualities which are more commonly expected in a treatise of its kind. Dr. Mackintosh writes: "A recent writer on some cardinal elements of the Gospel has insisted on 'the demand they make for an enlargement of human faculty to take in the unimagined greatness newly revealed to them by God'; and this sense of dilation, of infinity, of inexhaustible and unending magnitude, is the element we are most of all bound to pass into our theoretic statements. It may be taken as certain that the student of Christology will undergo in the field of theory the same experience of perpetually renewed effort to grasp a transcendent object as he encounters in the realm of devotion. In both spheres, of doctrine as of faith, it transpires that each new conception of Christ we form, only to dismantle and re-shape it later on the score of inadequacy, gives place to one always more broad and deep and high" (Bk. III., i. 1, pp. 301 f., and see the whole chapter).

wrote, not with self-consciousness, nor with much consciousness of the literary and historical difficulty of his undertaking, but because the Spirit of God constrained him.¹ In a word, the apocalyptic impulse still rules in this late Jewish work.

The apocalyptic impulse is still there, nor has the old apocalyptic expectation died away. S. John's doctrine of the continual presence of Christ in His Church, and the application of this doctrine in the instituted sacraments, do indeed fit the believers to live on in a world that may last for generations or ages, but they are to live in a manner that keeps them ready for the end, and that keeps them ready for such upheavals of the civilized world as the author of Hebrews would call "comings" of Christ. The sacraments and the Lord's continual presence are spiritual, therefore moral, truths. They mean that the Christian ideal is (what men think impossible) sinlessness; that the believers are bound together in a fellowship whose mutual charity not only goes beyond the ordinary rules of civilization, but reaches even to this—that the brethren must be willing to lay down their lives for one another; and S. John almost shocks us by the accumulated severity with which he marks off this indefinitely waiting Church from the unexpectant world in the midst of which it lives—"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one."

"This indefinitely waiting Church"; and yet that may be too rash a phrase. Dr. Brooke, in his Commentary on the Johannine Epistles² shews reason to think that in his

¹ This is brought out by Browning in "A Death in the Desert."

² *The International Critical Commentary: The Johannine Epistles*, pp. xxi., 37, 51.

first Epistle, written after the Gospel, and probably in the author's extreme old age, he returned to the simple expectation of earlier days, and believed that his Lord's coming might be even before he departed this life. But Dr. Brooke also shews that the Apostle has enlarged and deepened his thought on the subject. Instead of a mere "coming" he has learned to conceive of that great event as a "manifestation." The primitive imagery of apocalypse is dropped; faith now leaves the mode of the act undefined; place is made for all that is really spiritual, but for nothing else.

Such is the effect of criticism, discipline, the modesty of church fellowship, on an apostolic mind, aided by the habit of sacramental contemplation. Some faint reflection of a like process is perhaps to be discerned in the movement of theology to-day.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EPISTLE AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

The sacramentalist penetrates through the book to the author's mind ; he reads critically—Hence the writer of this Epistle is careful of the original intention of his quotations. But some of them probably had an originally Messianic reference—Influenced both by the schools and by the unlearned wisdom of our Lord, he represents the reasonable, scholarly-trained moiety of the apostolic Church—But in the main he treats the Old Testament as the voice of God conversing with him—Hence he shews freedom in his treatment of the mere letter and of the limits of the Canon ; but at the same time a remarkable reverence which appears especially in his doctrine of the Holy Spirit—That freedom, characteristic of early Judaism and early Christianity, has been lost and recovered more than once in later times—The influence of the Septuagint on the Greek style of the Epistle and of the New Testament generally—New Testament Greek, its developement and variety as a reinvigorating of literary Greek by contact with colloquial language under the government of sincere and simple art. This, already prepared for by the Septuagint, made a new start in the Greek language, like the rise of Byzantine architecture. But it was narrowly bounded and short-lived.

A SACRAMENTALIST will have respect for books ; but he will never care much for books in themselves. Books are sacraments of their author's mind, and the sacramental reading of a book is converse with the author.

But here, as in all other sacramental operation, the visible phenomenon must be treated honestly and reasonably ; it must be taken for what it really is, and must not be re-shaped according to the fancy of the reader. The sacramentalist turned scholar will always be something of a critic ; he will take his book in the

proper historical sense, and will never forget the meaning it had for the people who first read it.

Such is the attitude of the author of Hebrews to the Old Testament. The prophets are not mere books to him, but men in whom God spake. But again, God spake in them to the fathers, and he recognizes the limitations of a message thus delivered. God spake in them, "by divers portions and in divers manners." He did not give the whole truth by any one of them; "The word of the beginning of Christ," or (as we might say) Old Testament Christology, was of gradual growth; each generation received what it could in its own circumstances receive.¹

We are not then surprized to find that this author is careful of the original intention of the texts he quotes. Thus in the introduction, ch. i. 1-6, the three verses quoted referred in their context to kings of Israel and to the people of Israel. The exegesis of the passage is

¹ Cf. the Rabbinic idea that the Divine Voice at Sinai came to each one according to the comprehension of each. "This is a commentary on the Psalmist's expression, 'The voice of the Lord is powerful.' It was not the outwardly audible voice of God, for the universe would be unable to endure this. It was the inner voice as each one comprehended it. At the time of the Revelation on Sinai every man felt a Voice within him—a Voice which gave him the counsel which best answered his own needs" (Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature*, p. 111). Deuteronomy approaches this spiritual interpretation of Exodus in ch. v., where, in verbal opposition to the earlier narrative, it is written of the Ten Commandments: "These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and he added no more." Abelson also quotes this saying: "No day passes but God is making new Halachah in the Beth Din of Above" (p. 113). He understands "that God is daily creating new rules and regulations for the guidance of mankind." But it seems possible to compare it with our Lord's sayings in Joh. xiv.-xvi. about the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit, as though the Rabbis meant that God is ever applying the Law afresh, developing theology.

confused by ignoring this. The argument is that the Lord has inherited the name of Son which had been already given in the past to those who in the Old Testament were entitled "Christs." And a large proportion of his quotations have no clear application unless we remember that "anointed" in the Old Testament is the same word as "Christ," and that the earlier manifestations of Christhood are to be regarded not as arbitrary prophecies of Gospel days, but as standing in one line of life with Jesus who inherits, gathers up, and completes them. Thus in xi. 26 Moses is said to have "thought the reproach of the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt"; but this is said in the words of a Psalm in which the people of Israel were meant by the Christ, and the author used no unnatural principle of allegorizing the Old Testament, though doubtless his sense of the continuity of Israel's history with the Lord's added much richness to his allusion.¹ Of his reference to Melchizedek we have already spoken; evidently that would be pointless unless attention were directed to the original context of both passages, in Genesis and in the Psalms. The same may be said of the quotation from Jeremiah in ch. viii. In ch. x. 5-7 we have another type of quotation. Here our Lord is represented as

¹ Cf. Westcott, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, "On the use of the Old Testament in the Epistle," *ad fin.*; "It is of the greatest moment for us as Christians to strive, as we may, to enter into the spirit of Judaism; to study it not as a stereotyped system, but as an advancing manifestation of the Living God. . . . If we regard Judaism in this way, the history of Christianity itself will be quickened for us with a new life. We shall have before our eyes what is really by anticipation a divine commentary upon its most perplexing passages. . . . In this respect the Epistle to the Hebrews brings before us a forgotten aspect of the Divine working. It marks the office of the Messianic nation no less than the office of a personal Messiah."

declaring, "when he comes into the world," that He comes to do God's will. His declaration is expressed in the words of a Psalm. The author does not mean that the Psalmist directly foretold things or wrote his words (so to say) for our Lord to use. He takes them as suitable words to express our Lord's purpose, the more suitable of course in that they are sacred words, inspired by the same Spirit of God who inspired the Lord's whole action and teaching.

It seems easy to explain all the quotations in the Epistle in this reasonable manner; the original intention of the words is never forgotten; arbitrary applications are not forced upon them; the spirit of their prophecy works through the "indissoluble life" of Christ which binds together the old and the new as childhood, manhood and martyrdom have been bound together in the growth of a saintly life.

The quotations have not always been so explained. That is perhaps due to their having been compared with the less exact usage of some other New Testament writers, or with the allegorizing of Philo. But whatever the usage elsewhere may be, it is not even likely that this author's should be the same. He has his own idiosyncrasy; he is more modern in this respect than his companions. It is not an *a priori* assumption that prompts this claim for him, but observation of his written Epistle considered apart from other books; the prejudice is rather in coming to this Epistle with other books in mind, and feeling it impossible that he can be peculiar.

There can be little doubt that this Epistle is characterized among the other New Testament books by the predominance in it of such historical method.

But when that is clearly perceived, it is necessary to examine it again and see whether the absolute statement does not need modification. Now the last quotation made in it is in xiii. 20, "who brought again the shepherd of the sheep . . . in the blood of an eternal covenant." This is adapted from two passages in the Old Testament, Is. lxiii. 11, and Zech. ix. 11. The original context in both places is (in the language we have found it so often necessary to use in this essay) apocalyptic; the reference was from the first to no contemporary person, but to the great, expected Redeemer. We know how much of this apocalyptic expectation is expressed in the later parts of the Old Testament. We learn from Gunkel how far back its roots run. We begin to perceive that the "reasonable" interpretations of many passages which the Wellhausen generation of critics referred—with a necessarily diminished appreciation of the astonishing sublimity of the language—to contemporary persons, are insufficient. Supposing for instance we could fix the date of the composition of Ps. cx., so often quoted in this Epistle, how far would that help us to interpret it? Was it not perhaps "Messianic," in the narrower and intenser sense of the term, from the first? If not, is its remote origin the important historical fact about it? Is it not more important to recognize that we can only trace it clearly in its liturgical use; that this brings us to the Synagogue of late Judaism; and if used there its Messianic intention would give it its value? Certainly it was so understood in later times, *e.g.* by S. Peter in Acts ii. 34, and by our Lord in the Gospels. Mr. Box has shewn that the Jews used it so in our Lord's time, but dis-

continued that interpretation in later times.¹ If our author recognized the directly Messianic import of this Psalm, that might not be an exception to his principle; the historical interpretation itself might be mainly the Messianic.

We find in the Old Testament and in the Judaism, of which the Old Testament was the inspiration and the expression, a complex web of Messianic thought. There is (1) the ancient oriental myth of the Deliverer. This may be studied in its various forms in the books of Gunkel, Jeremias, Oesterley. In the Old Testament there may be vestiges of it in such passages as Gen. ii. iii., but only vestiges. As Jeremias says, the Old Testament writers did not believe in the mythology; it merely gave them an alphabet in which to write their own purer faith.² But the old and crude beliefs lingered among the people. Hence we find (2) the severe

¹ "The Christian Messiah in the Light of Judaism Ancient and Modern," *JTS*, Ap. 1912.

² *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East* (Beaumont's translation), ii. p. 276: "The mythology is the popularizing of a teaching of the religious ideas of which are related to those of the Bible. The mythology itself can only enlighten and explain the alphabet of the religious expression." Cf. p. 290: "From these kinds of figures of speech we should draw conclusions as to religious history with great caution. Sometimes what we should call popular superstition presents itself. But often it is only a question of a deep religious idea presented in mythological phraseology," and i. p. 82: "The writers are only partially skilled in the mythological manner. To some it is agreeable, others have suppressed it, others favoured it. The pseudo-graphists turn it into frank opposition to some of the writers of the Canon who use the mythological style delicately and sensitively." Mr. L. W. King, in his article "Israel, Greece, and Babylon," *Church Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1913, shews that Jeremias must be read with some caution, especially with regard to his astral theory. But the passages I have quoted are safe, though Jeremias means more in them than what I quote them for.

The sketch I offer of the developement through the Prophets and post-exilic writers, is suggested by what Cheyne has said in *The Origin of the Psalter*, and other places.

doctrine of the early prophets, discouraging the superstition involved in those crude ideas, banishing the language in which they were expressed, and concentrating faith on the LORD'S union with His people and direction of events in this present life. Then (3) when the prophets' victory was won the old mythological language is again used, but innocently; it is a literary adornment, taken symbolically by every one, since no one any longer believes in the old mythology. But more important than this revival of mere language is (4) the return on a higher spiritual plane of the old faith itself. The forward-looking, other-worldly hope of the divine Deliverer comes back in that apocalyptic expectation of the reign of God, which appears in Daniel and in many of the later pieces of prophecy in the Canon. Within the Canon this apocalyptic hope is nearly always tinged with the earlier prophetic tradition. Contemporary needs fire the impulse; the action of God is still a present action though its consummation is delayed; there is no "despair of this world." Perhaps indeed that is more or less true of all Jewish Apocalypses. There is a certain danger of our overlooking their full spiritual significance through our hasty satisfaction with a neat phrase. But the phrase does express a real difference between the canonical Books and developments outside the Canon, and we have to recognize (5) another class of apocalyptic writings, such as Enoch and The Psalms of Solomon, which shews the older Messianic hope branching out into various interpretations of the Scriptural faith. These in one direction; while in another (6) we have the allegorizing of the Alexandrines and the Philonic doctrine of the Word. In following

out the subject it would also be proper to distinguish the political from the spiritual apocalyptic idea, as in the two divisions of 2 Esdras, or in a comparison of the religious temper shewn in the opening chapters of S. Luke with the Zealotism which just appears in the Gospels and played so fierce a part in the revolt against Rome. And finally the new simplification of faith would have to be noticed which Legalism and Rabbinism brought about, at first itself in two forms but finally (after the Barcochba revolt) hardened into strict Pharisaic legalism, and the substitution of the Law for the Messiah.

A complex web; but more puzzling than its mere complexity is the difficulty of deciding where and when the several strands first come in. Even in the earlier prophets it would be prejudice only that prevented our recognizing something more than the puritan "reasonableness" we have noticed. There are passages in their writings too where the thought of "the Day of the LORD" seems to burst out in fire and strange sublimity. The return of the ancient, crude, half-pagan idea, upon its higher spiritual plane was after all no sudden return; it had never departed, and the prophet-reformers themselves had been sanctifying it in one way or another all along. What are we to think of Is. ix. 1-6? Is it a later piece? Does the Septuagint text shew that at least its most striking phrases are the apocalyptic inspiration of a more Judaic age? Or does Isaiah of Jerusalem himself, like S. John in his Epistle,¹ turn to the popular faith in the divine Person, other than Yahveh, who shall "come" and redeem His people in the "later days"?

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 247.

This at least we may assert, that later criticism has made it impossible to accept the reference to Hezekiah or any merely Hebrew king as an adequate explanation of this tremendous prophecy.

Now the Epistle to the Hebrews follows mainly the reasonable lead of early prophecy; so the author signifies in his opening verse. Hellenism also however influences him with its quasi-philosophical brooding over abstruse suggestions in Old Testament texts. But there is besides a touch of the most ancient and most enduring of all the Jewish styles, viz. the apocalyptic, and it is impossible to be sure how far the merely rational explanation of such quotations as those in ch. i. is to be insisted upon; how far a more uncompromising Messianic use must be allowed for. To some extent it certainly must be allowed for; the Christ of the Epistle is not deduced from the Old Testament by mere logic.

Here, as so often, account must be taken of the influence of our Lord himself, an influence which directly affected the Galilean disciples, which flowed out from them upon the apostolic Church, and thence in turn reached the author of Hebrews.

Mr. Box shews—with the weight of his Judaistic erudition reinforcing the vaguer assertions of his predecessors—that our Lord was imbued from the first with the very spiritual Messianic ideas of that small circle of faithful Jews which is sketched in Lk. i. ii.; that Is. liii. deepened Dan. vii. for Him; and thus His Messianic doctrine became new as well as old. This is a valuable truth, but perhaps it is described in rather too literary a form. It is a beautiful touch in the Gospel of the scholar evangelist, that shews our Lord at the

beginning as a studious boy. Yet the impression made upon us by the Gospels as a whole is that our Lord by no means lived in a world of books. If it may be reverently said, He could not have been so great had He been more learned. The unfaltering decisions of His trustful faith, the intuitive directness of His Messianic action, are not merely not drawn from books, but (so far as ordinary experience suggests) are inconsistent with book-learning. His words, again, seem to be the doctrine of a pure, strong mind, educated but comparatively unlettered. Hence that secure faculty for simplifying, and at the same time gathering up a still larger complexity of thought in the simplification; that penetration to the living heart of discussions, or of Scriptural problems; that masterly rejection of bewildering superfluity; and also that bold unconcern for verbal consistency, and that disconcerting vigour of paradox.

The Epistle reveals as its author a man of letters, highly appreciative of this fresh, unlettered wisdom; using all his own school training to get through barren scholarship to an instructed simplicity. His personal bent in dealing with the Scriptures is towards the reasonable, historic interpretation; Alexandrine by education, he is "Antiochene" in temperament. But he has also, partly by way of conscious art, partly as a second nature, the directness which goes straight to the heart of a passage, and draws from it, as by a short cut, a spiritual value to serve the immediate purpose of truth. His Epistle was nearer than any other book of the New Testament to the critical mind of the generation which is just now growing old; how often have treatises that mediated between that criticism and earlier thought been summed up by a

quotation of its opening verse. But, more closely considered, it is nearer still to the mind of the generation now growing up, which has learned to press beyond the mechanism of the schools and to use the principle of criticism for the interpretation of the Old Testament with caution and exactness, yet still as a collection of oracles, as one sacred and mystical book; a generation too which has learned that reason and logic are but instruments to direct the larger reach of intuitional apprehension.

This skill of the author in interpretation is then derived from our Lord himself. But in our Lord's grasp the various aims of many earlier minds were gathered up. And in the Church of the first century His synthetic faculty was again distributed. The connexion and difference between S. Paul, S. John and this Epistle, and again between them and the thought of the Synoptic Gospels, is only understood when the Church is presupposed with its catholic consciousness behind them all. These writers bring to expression, correct, and carry deeper, the mind of certain groups, and these groups are held together by the common life. Hebrews may represent a smaller group than the others—its author "left great prose to a little clan," but he does represent the reasonable scholarly-trained mind of the early Church. The ancient guess that S. Luke was the writer is a recognition of this scholarship in general. To that mind the Old Testament was a divine book, full of deep surprising harmonies, yet to be treated according to the laws of reasonable scholarship. The modern guess that Apollos was the writer recognizes this special kind of scholarship in the Epistle. And, as far as scholarliness goes either guess is defensible. Only scholar as he was

the author was so much more. He took a side in a political controversy; he knew it was the truly Christian side; and he used not merely scholarship, but the special rhetoric in which he had been trained to persuade his friends to find peace where he had found it.

He used his scholarship for a purpose, and so he is never pedantic, never even detached. His learning was deepened and simplified by the tradition of the Church in which the influence of the Lord's inimitable wisdom was still fresh. Out of this scholarship thus held in check and stimulated, there has arisen, in this Epistle, a new Alexandrine form of theology which has broken free from the classical restraints—already growing old and nigh unto vanishing away,—has gained a new reality, is actually a new form, a new creation. And with respect to the Old Testament, the difference is this. The school of Alexandria treated the Old Testament as an inspired word. The written word was the great thing. Almost every syllable had its significance and could be operated with by the skilled manipulator. There are hints of this author's apprenticeship in such a school, but in the main he treats the Old Testament as the voice of God conversing with him.

Hence we are not surprised to find that he uses the mere written word somewhat boldly. He selects what suits him. In ch. i. his argument is that angels are not, as certain men were, called sons of God. But they are so called in Job and even in Genesis; he ignores that. In Exodus it is said that Moses was afraid and fled from Egypt. It is possible to make xi. 27 agree with this, but the natural interpretation of the passage shews the author deliberately contradicting what the whole narrative

led him to consider inconsistent with the character of Moses. These are trifling liberties, but the sweeping away of the whole Levitical ordinance is a bolder stroke than any that S. Paul ventured. There are two justifications for it. First, that he takes a wide view of the Old Testament as a whole, instead of submitting to the express but really limited authority of some passages. Secondly, that he hears the teaching of the Holy Spirit not only in the written word but also in the signs of the times; as the age moved on it had become clear that God intended those ordinances to pass away.

That wide view of the whole library of sacred Scriptures is somewhat remarkable in one who had been trained in the school of Philo. For though Philo accepted the larger Canon, it is evident that the five books of the Law stood for him in quite a peculiar position of authority. The Christians were not the first to pay increased reverence to Prophets and Psalms, but the larger interest shews at least that the Christians were in sympathy with the more liberal school of Jewish theology from the first, and that such theology came more naturally home to them than even to a Hellenist like Philo.¹ It is also to be noticed that this correction of the authority of particular books by the general

¹ Cf. Gamaliel's action on behalf of the Apostles in Acts v. And for Jewish interest in the larger Canon, R. H. Charles, *Fragments of a Zadokite Work*, Introd. § 8: "In the eyes of the Zadokite Party, the Prophets were at all events not less important than the Law, though theoretically the Law was held in highest honour. In this respect this Party are at variance with the practice of Judaism as a whole after the year A.D. 70, but not with the Apocalyptic or more spiritual side of Pharisaism before the Christian era. The chief studies of Apocalyptic Pharisaism were devoted to Prophecy, and hence to them the Law and the Prophets were *practically* of equal worth, however differently they might view this question *theoretically*."

authority of the whole, was the principle on which critics of the Wellhausen school have worked. The result of their criticism, it is sometimes said, has been to reverse the position of the Law and the Prophets. The epigram in which this is expressed is, like all epigrams, but a half truth; yet it is a half truth which might also be applied to this Epistle.

It is however of still more interest to recognize that the appeal to a power beyond the book itself is in line with the larger criticism which is already in movement. We have just now illustrated this criticism with reference to the Messianic idea, not merely as it is recorded in the words of the Old Testament, but as those words are explained in the light of the whole life and thought of the people among whom the Old Testament was formed. For the New Testament the developement has been something like this. The crude worship of the letter was succeeded by a scholarly attention to niceties of language, to Greek articles and aorists. Then came inferences from internal evidence as to the dates and relationship of documents. Now the whole growing life of the Church and its connexion with other life outside itself is recovered, as far as may be, and indications drawn from a limited range of literature are corrected by the larger living environment. Both problems and solutions that are merely literary become less importunate. Thus Mr. Box can appeal to the early chapter of S. Luke for illustration of the thoughts of a certain circle of Judaism at the time of our Lord's birth. But those chapters are explained by and co-ordinated with a mass of other evidence from many sources. The outcome of it all is a view of a life which includes more

than the little circle pictured by S. Luke. In the light of that larger life S. Luke's narrative becomes exceedingly credible and natural, but some minute literary questions are seen to be unanswerable and at the same time of comparatively small importance. It does not after all matter very much whether the Hymns are the actual words of the persons to whom they are assigned, or whether S. Luke is using an ordinary device of the literature of his day, and expressing the thoughts that were in the hearts of persons of that time and place, in poetry of his own choosing. In any case he is true to what we are assured, with a fuller certainty than before, was the faith and joy of those persons—a select band in a larger brotherhood, to whom the general hope had become something more. May it not be that this altered point of view will presently make a difference in the critical appreciation of S. John's Gospel?

S. John's Gospel suggests another illustration of the parallel. The Reformers appealed to antiquity, and so did Rome. But Lancelot Andrewes already perceived that the true appeal was a longer one—*ad antiquitatem, immo ad ultimam antiquitatem*; and of late it has been to the very mind of Christ that men would fain have recourse. And for a while the very mind of Christ seemed to be recoverable in the simple teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Then it was suspected that there was difficulty in discovering the precise form of that teaching. Then it began to seem that the discovery was indeed a simpler matter than the scrupulous and learned had supposed, but that the teaching though plain enough was very startling, and needed adaptation even for a Paul or a Pascal or a Tolstoi. And so at last we take to heart

the doctrine of S. John's Gospel, the doctrine of the living Christ and the continued teaching through the Holy Spirit, and we look to the experience of all history, and to the conscience of the present generation, as co-operating with the written word and interpreting it. The mind of Christ as we need to know it, and as indeed it really is, is the mind of the still living Lord; the means of knowing it are not merely books, however sacred.¹

Yet our interest in these books increases and our reverence for them. Their authority may have become less precise. "The Bible," writes Dr. Hamilton, "is no longer the final court of appeal; there is a standard behind it by means of which it is proved to be inspired," and he goes on to shew that this new standard cannot be accepted—"To the Apostles, the Scriptures proved the authority of Jesus; there was no need to call in His authority to prove them. And to Jesus Himself also the Scriptures were of divine authority."² But Dr. Hamilton, in his own impressive book, interprets this "divine authority" in quite a modern sense. He too "tries" the Word and persuades acceptance by arguments of reason. It must be so. His statement is true, but it does not exclude comment. Our Lord did criticize the Scriptures while He recognized their authority. So did S. Paul, and when he appealed to the Covenant that was

¹ Cf. Westcott, *The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle, ad fin.*: "The Epistle reminds us that there is a correspondence between the Word of God in the heart, and the written Word: that both deal with the fulness of hope in man and in nature (iv. 11, 13). Trusting to this living Word, therefore, we must gladly allow ourselves to be 'borne forward' to further knowledge, leaving that which we have already gained, or rather regarding it as our starting point (vi. 1). . . . The outward ritual, the earthly kingdom, suggested hopes which they could not satisfy. So perhaps it is still."

² *The People of God*, i. pp. xxii. xxvi.

older than the Law, he was not only in harmony with a criticism which was to come centuries later, but he was quite loyally following where the Lord had led the way. Now if it is the Book that we are considering, this means that the New Testament was coming into being. And the rise of the New Testament makes a great difference. At about¹ the time of our Lord's ministry the Old Testament was complete, accepted, authoritative. But for us the New Testament is even greater than the Old, and its gradual growth, collection and canonization cannot but affect our interpretation of the claim to authority: "The law was given through Moses, the grace and the truth came into being through Jesus Christ." We do recognize a standard behind both Testaments. We rightly recognize it, for it is nothing less than the mind of Christ, and that mind can only be reached when it is widely sought, "God also bearing witness with the earlier witnesses, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his own will."

Yet whatever minor disagreements we may venture upon, it is certain that Dr. Hamilton has laid emphasis on an important truth. The books of Holy Scripture are different from other books, and the difference does lie just there; they are books of divine authority. That is what the Church has always asserted, while leaving their inspiration undefined. It is possible that much of our difficulty in explaining their value has come from asking the wrong question: "What, in the abstract, is

¹ This necessary qualifying adverb suggests a difficulty in Dr. Hamilton's argument. What were the Scriptures which our Lord recognized as of divine authority? Were they quite the same as the final Jewish Canon? Cf. *infra*, pp. 267, 275.

divine inspiration?" instead of, "What do we mean by obeying the divine authority of these books?" And when we do put our enquiry in the latter form, it is not hard to see that the authority is greater than ever, though, or because, it is diffused. Look at the sacrament of the Book in the light of the sacrament of the Person. "Et fortasse," said Erasmus, "latius se fundit spiritus Christi quam nos interpretamur," *i.e.* the Spirit of Christ is more diffused, more interbreathed (or rather interbreathing) with the Spirit in men and the Spirit in nature than our interpretations allow. Who would contest that? Yet who would fear that the Person of Christ suffered diminution by the recognition? The developement of Christology has not weakened the authority of Christ by recognizing Him more and more as one who is "being all in all fulfilled." Authority is more nobly authoritative as it becomes less patient of definition.

Both in Christology and in the interpretation of the Old Testament the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews took the step his time and place demanded. In each case it was a step towards the recognition of a less defined but really deeper authority. The authority of his Highpriest is not so precise and direct as the authority of Jesus the Christ seemed to S. Peter outside Caesarea Philippi, nor yet as the authority of the expected Messiah seemed to S. Paul. "Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, yea and unto the ages," is less easy to receive as a watchword than *Maran atha*. His treatment of the Levitical Priesthood is bolder criticism than S. Paul's treatment of the Law in general. His application of Ps. viii. to the paradox of human glory is more subtle than S. Paul's proof from the Scriptures of the call of the

Gentiles. But might not a literalist doubt whether his careful and delicate Alexandrinism concerning Melchizedek did not betray a weakened sense of the authority of the letter when compared with S. Paul's bold Rabbinism, "he saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ?" Both are examples of the apostolic writers in their more provincial character, but it can hardly be doubted that our author (in this comparison) respects the true authority of the Old Testament more than S. Paul, though he treats it with the caution of a student who knows that it has a history just as all books have.

He knew that, and his knowledge restrained him from some kinds of exegesis. The mind of Christ was to him a standard behind the books themselves; he read that mind not only in the books but even more in the signs of his own swift times. He treated the letter of the books with a certain freedom in consequence. But no writer in the New Testament had a greater reverence for the ancient Scriptures, none so keen an insight, so beautiful a sympathy. In addition to what has been already said in many places of this essay, let us dwell for a moment on one particular illustration of this, his treatment of the subject of the Angels. In his day there was much elaborate speculation on this subject. On the other hand, his own view of Angels had probably been already set forth by others with a good deal of fanciful detail. But for him the Old Testament was enough. He made one quotation from Ps. civ., "He maketh his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire." He placed this quotation in such a position among others as to bring out clearly his main argument, that man and

God stand (so to say) on the line of personality, and the Lord Jesus Christ connects man with God along that line. The Angels are in another line; they are winds and flames, or as we might say to-day "forces of nature." But that is not all. Such a conception illustrates the sacramental principle which runs through his letter. What is evident here to the senses is the sacrament of the eternal being which God contemplates. It is not that Angels are degraded, but nature is exalted; its reality, which is glorious, is sacramentally suggested. Hence he presently speaks of the Angels as liturgic ministers in the eternal sanctuary, sharing by their ministry in God's purpose of salvation. And again, in ch. xii., the Angels keep festival in the heavenly Jerusalem; this glorious, sacramental system of nature has part in the perfection of eternal life. It is a theme which S. John too touches in his Gospel of "the Word"; it is more fully worked out in the Apocalypse. But what we have to notice is that in this Epistle the allusion, so brief but so pregnant, was only possible to one who used the Old Testament with a very reverent as well as scholarly love.

Closely connected with this subject of the Angels is his one mention of the devil. Here again there was in his day a copious popular lore of evil spirits. On the other hand there was a growing tendency among philosophical Hellenists and in one school at least of Rabbinism¹ to ignore or rationalize this popular belief. Our

¹ Cf. Box, *Ezra-apocalypse*, p. xlf. : "It is noteworthy that the form of the apocalypticist's conception is specifically Rabbinic. He bases his conclusions on the doctrine of the *yeşer ha-ra'*; there is no suggestion that the introduction of evil into the world was due to external agents or forces. . . . The corruption of the human race is regarded as due to a development of

Lord had both sanctioned it and checked it, S. Paul had employed it in a very noble way (Eph. vi. 12) to correct the fierce religious temper which had perhaps threatened to descend to the Church from the "imprecatory psalms" and other parts of the Old Testament—our battle, he said, is not against human flesh and blood but against the spirits of darkness. All through the New Testament runs the thought that these spirits are no immortal persons like men, but have been conquered and abolished by Christ.¹ Within the Church the Christian is removed

something inherent in man's nature (the *yeşer ha-ra'*). Though this doctrine is sometimes combined, in the Rabbinical literature, with the popular view of Satan (Satan works his evil purpose by the instrumentality of the *yeşer ha-ra'*), it probably really represents a theological refinement which was intended to supersede the older crude popular ideas about demonic agency; cf. e.g. the saying of Simon b. Laqish: *Satan and yeşer and the angel of death are one.*"

The *Ezra-apocalypse* is later than our Epistle, and Simon ben Laqish much later, but it is not unreasonable to infer that the development had already begun some years before the *Ezra-apocalypse* was composed. Mr. Box speaks of "the older mythological view" as "found in Genesis and in the older apocalyptic literature," but though in Genesis that "mythology" is used, it is used with no mythological character. The narrative of the Fall is a tale or parable, not a piece of mythology, and "the old serpent" appears in the tale simply as a serpent, one of the beasts of the field. As for the Satan being one of the LORD's angels, on the side of good, in Job (and therefore in Zechariah) few readers of Job will doubt that; none certainly who were present at Miss Amherst's "Drama of Job" in December 1912. It was bold to assign Elihu's words to the Satan ("Would that Job were tried unto the end"), as he watched Job's affliction and recovered steadfastness under his first trial, but the angelic sympathy which they expressed was dramatically consistent in the highest degree.

¹ Dr. Swete speaks of "the personal or quasi-personal 'Satan'" (*The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 370). Cf. p. 284: "In the thought of the Apostolic age the spiritual forces of evil take shape in the form of personal or quasi-personal existences." I think Dr. Swete's expression supports what I have ventured to say, but there is always danger in such speculation of ignoring the reality of the battle with evil, and I gratefully add to this note a paragraph from his book which corrects that tendency.

"However this may be, it seems that the teaching of the New Testament, both in the Gospels and the Epistles, supports the doctrine that there is a spiritual order of beings or forces which is directly antagonistic to Christ and

already from their sphere. The business of the Church is to carry on the potentially accomplished work of the Master, and free the whole world of men from that shadowy malignant power. As an Alexandrine there could be little doubt as to the point of view from which the author of Hebrews would regard the question. As one steeped in the Old Testament where Satan is named but three times¹ and only then as an angel obedient to God, he would hold that point of view still more strongly. But as a disciple who believed that our Lord had conquered the devil he could not speak of the work of salvation without reference to that great act. The problem is not one of ordinary fact, but of the interpretation of spiritual reality. He declines controversy and assertion alike. He employs the Old Testament antithesis of life and death, and in a very few skilfully selected words he expresses all the essential points; "that through death he might abolish him who is the potentate of the realm of death, that is the devil; and

to His Spirit in the Church. In the days of His flesh, our Lord, full of the Holy Spirit, cast these unclean spirits out of the bodies of the possessed, even as He himself in the Spirit had driven away their Ruler. When after the Ascension He came again in the Spirit the same antagonism appeared, but the battle was fought thenceforth in the inner life of man. The Ruler of this world (Joh. xii. 31 f., xvi. 11), the Ruler of the power of the air (Eph. ii. 2), already potentially condemned and cast out by the victory of the Cross, still retains his precarious hold on the world of heathendom, and wages war upon the Body of Christ (Eph. vi. 12, *ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη . . . πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς*), working through his agents, the countless forces of spiritual evil which only the Parousia will finally disperse. Such a view of the mystery of life may be inconsistent with present modes of thought, but that it was held by the generation to whom we owe the New Testament, and that they represent our Lord as having held it, there is no reason to doubt" (p. 371).

¹ At least in the Palestinian Canon. Again the question arises, What were the Scriptures to our Lord, His apostles, and to this writer? Certainly he used some of the Greek books. But whether he recognized their "authority" is doubtful,

might deliver all those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

One more characteristic of the Epistle may be noticed, which is, at least in part, to be explained by the author's instinctive sympathy with Old Testament modes of thought. “The Apocalypse,” writes Dr. Swete, “concerns itself chiefly with one particular mode by which the Spirit communicated His mind to the Apostolic Church. The Spirit of this book is ‘the Spirit of prophecy.’”¹ This might be said of Hebrews also, in the sense that the Holy Spirit is pre-eminently represented by the author as the Spirit of God who inspires the Old Testament; for it is surely a misreading of the Epistle that would induce us to suppose that he himself wrote as a “prophet” in the Church. For an analysis and *rationale* of his methods of quotation we should of course turn to Dr. Westcott's excursus “On the use of the Old Testament in the Epistle.” Dr. Milligan in his book, *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (p. 204 f.), shews how the author's treatment of his quotations as the direct words of God “is in striking harmony with the high view of inspiration which prevailed at Alexandria,” and how “Philo again supplies frequent parallels” to the indefinite mode of citation which he twice employs (ii. 6, iv. 4). Alexandria has indeed helped him, but has only helped him to use more skilfully what he had already learned from the Old Testament. There he found the Prophets' word was always the word that came to them from the LORD. He found also that this “coming” was not unfrequently defined further as being the operation of God through His Spirit. Hence he is content in general

¹ *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 276.

to refer his quotations directly to God. In one place (ii. 6) the argument requires that the expression of man's hope by a man should be declared, and he therefore recognizes the human side of the written word, and introduces a Psalmist "calling God to witness." Philo may have suggested the formula, but he uses the formula for his particular purpose, not in vague imitation. And finally, in three places (iii. 7, ix. 8, x. 15), he recalls the more defined doctrine of inspiration from the prophetic books, and notices the mediation of the Holy Spirit.

In these three passages only does he add the article to "Spirit." To this book-student the most distinctly personal manifestation of the Spirit of God was as the inspirer of the prophetic word. From the current which was rapidly carrying forward a new conception of the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Christ, a conception not less vigorous, but more precise, than the Old Testament had given,¹ he seems to be somewhat aloof. Nothing indeed could have been a more natural preparation for the recognition of the Spirit as Person than the mighty Spirit of God pictured in the Old Testament, but to him the picture is not so impressive in that form. He is perhaps more checked than others by the Old Testament watchword "The LORD our God, the LORD one!" For

¹ Cf. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 359 f.: "We have seen the Divine Energy, of which the Old Testament spoke as the Spirit of God, manifesting itself in new relations, and by new processes of spiritual life. It has been revealed as the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Body of Christ; it has made for itself a sanctuary in the heart of man, consecrating his whole being to the service of God, in whose image it has created him anew. The whole amazing picture is drawn for us by men who speak of what they knew and had seen in the life of the age which immediately followed the great day of Pentecost. If at any time they go beyond their personal knowledge, it is only to give expression to hopes which were justified by events which had occurred in their own day."

him it is God who directs the distributions of Holy Spirit. It is Christ the Highpriest who maketh intercession. Believers are made participant of Holy Spirit, as though of the Spirit of God rather than of "the Holy Spirit" of whom his master Paul so often spoke. Perhaps the concentration of his letter may have something to do with it. God, Jesus Christ, his friends, are the "persons" on whom his thought is fixed; they are acting for the moment in one limited scene, in one engrossing drama of life and death; according to his habit he pictures this visibly, and he adds no touches which might confuse the intense clearness of his picture.

Yet this hardly reaches the heart of the matter. There is an element in the Epistle which seems the very antithesis of that concentration. Even pictorially, its Temple is all reality, and the whole visible world is the outer shrine. And beyond his picture the author's thought runs out to all men, all life; and the contracted struggle on which he fixes our attention gains its worth from the universal and eternal setting. Is it rash to suppose that he would be in sympathy with that modern trend of thought which finds difficulty in reverencing the Holy Spirit (or God at all) as Person, not from lack of faith, but because of the common associations of the word "person," and because faith is bursting its older mould, and is trying to assimilate new ideas of vastness? Such faith has not yet found clear utterance, in spite of all it has learned of late about the larger view of personality, as an inclusive not exclusive idea. And in this author's reticence about the Holy Spirit he too seems to confess that on this subject he has not yet found clear speech. Neither S. Paul nor the general language of the Church

(as reflected in the histories of S. Luke, for instance, the scholar who is not the theologian) satisfies him. The vagueness of the Old Testament seems to him to leave the way open for a more complete expression. Alexandrine hints of "the cosmic significance of the work of the Spirit"¹ have deepened and complicated his meditations. For the present he restrains his pen, and is content with such a pregnant phrase as that in ch. ix., "Who through eternal Spirit offered himself in perfect purity to God." Once more we observe this Epistle standing between S. Paul and S. John. It brings a new thought into S. Paul's system. The result is disturbance and complication. The possibility of further harmony is indicated by a phrase, a picture, a sketch. Then S. John completes the synthesis of old and new, expressing the whole with what seems unstudied and unconscious simplicity.

No one in these days would argue from or about the Old Testament who did not read it in the Hebrew. There is nothing in this Epistle to shew that its author could do so. He is certainly content to quote from the Greek version; that was, speaking generally, the Bible of the New Testament writers, but it was his Bible as frankly as it was Philo's. And he read it in a text which, as far as we can at present judge, does not appear to have been the best text. So much must be allowed, but it cannot be objected that this has, for his purposes, made any real difference.

In the quotation from Ps. viii. in ch. ii., the original has "a little lower than God," and he quotes "a little lower than the angels." The chief importance of the

¹ Cf. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 5.

variation is that it enabled him to make one of those artistic connexions of paragraphs which he loved. The original implied, "nearly as high as God," and in the actual quotation that sense remains the more appropriate one, though of course the substitution of "angels" lessens its force somewhat. Then in his description of Jesus glorified in humiliation we may either keep the same sense and understand the qualifying phrase as a contrast to the "suffering of death," or we may take it as an adaptation of a well-known phrase in a new sense, such as is often made in sermons with good taste; a touch of reverent irony. The use of the Greek version has made all this possible; it has not involved any ignorant or misleading inference from the Psalm.

Again, in ch. x. a quotation is made from another Psalm in which the phrase, "a body hast thou prepared," is an inaccurate translation of the Septuagint. But that makes no difference to the argument, which is entirely concerned with what is written about the "will" of the Psalmist, of Christ, of God, and of the readers. It is only the influence of later discussion about the Eucharistic sacrifice that has given the word "body" special importance in this place.

It would seem too that he used not only the Greek version, but also the "Greek Bible." Wisdom, 2 Maccabees, perhaps Sirach, perhaps yet other writings outside the Palestinian Canon, might be reckoned among his sacred books.

It may be so, and no hurt in it. It may be that he uses those books in a different manner from the Hebrew ones. But is the question a practical one? Can we fancy him caring very much for official lists of

inspired books? Besides the Law and the Prophets, was there a third such list in his day? He makes what has (with doubtful accuracy) been styled a definition of faith; if he had made one of inspiration it would have been on the like broad lines, no exclusive, academic formula, but an encouragement to the enjoyment of inspired books. He has, in fact, very nearly done this in the opening lines of his letter, and we have lately been inclined to recognize that no stricter one is safe.¹ We can hardly imagine him making much use of Esther or Canticles, whether or no they were in the official Canon of his day. On the other hand, he does owe something more than a convenient terminology to the Philonic school, and to its influence he may have owed a respect for the Greek books of the Alexandrine Bible which was unusual in the Church of his day.²

But in all these Scriptural matters he uses a large freedom. And this freedom was generally enjoyed in his day. S. Paul protests against bondage to the letter, but the protest betrays the pupil of the Rabbis, reared in the straiter sect of the religion. There was a strait

¹ Cf. what Gregory writes of the Canon of the New Testament. "The criticism of the Canon shews, then, that in the sense in which the word used to be understood, and is by some to-day still understood, there never was a canon. At no period in the history of Christianity did the necessity make itself apparent to say just what was and just what was not Scripture" (*Canon and Text of the New Testament*, pp. 286 f.). Cf. Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, p. 156, who marks the difference between the Greek idea of *κανών*, "a list," and the Latin of *Canon*, "a rule."

² For "the coincidence . . . of the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews with that of Wisdom," see Goodrick, *The Book of Wisdom*, in the Oxford Church Bible Commentary, p. 8, and for S. Paul's use of Wisdom see Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, pp. 51 f.

legal school, but there were other schools also. The Hellenistic Jews were different. To many of them S. Paul's elaborate quotations in favour of the call of the Gentiles would have been unnecessary. So again Professor Lake says that "'the Seven' . . . attracted attention by their developement of certain lines of thought which were probably present in the teaching of Jesus himself, but were not taken up by the original Jerusalem community. These lines were concerned with the Temple and the official class connected with it," and he adds that an attitude of comparative detachment from the Temple and the Law "was perhaps not uncommon among Hellenists entirely apart from Christianity" (*The Earlier Epistles of S. Paul*, pp. 18 f.). Only after Jerusalem was finally lost in Barcochba's revolt did Judaism come to coincide with Legalism. And an additional justification for the author's disapproval of the seemingly patriotic party in the earlier revolt is that his disapproval may have been less anti-national than anti-legal; he was breaking with a sect, not with "Catholic Judaism."

After that final ruin the Jewish Church narrowed into Rabbinism. But the Christian Church went forward as the heir of larger Judaism. Part of her early heritage was freedom in Scriptural study; witness Origen, and the school of Antioch. Yet even Origen with his interest in the Hebrew text, perhaps also as forerunner of a later and more dogmatic theology of Alexandria, prepared the way for a check to this liberty. Presently S. Jerome learned something of Rabbinic prejudices about Canon and Text, and when the Septuagint gave place in the West to the Vulgate, the poetry of Scriptural interpreta-

tion began to harden into prose. For a while this caused but little difficulty since the allegorical method kept historical and literary problems at a distance. That method, however, wore out at last. It had been, in the beginning, a naïve but noble recognition of the truly prophetic character of Scripture as a whole, a safeguard against the unnatural application of isolated texts as particular foretellings of the details of the Gospel. It recognized an Old Testament full of Christ, instead of a series of selected proof-texts. But later generations repeated the allegories of their fathers, till that method grew conventional and in its turn degenerated from poetry to prose. Then that dulled prose was interrupted by the Renaissance and the Reformation, which began with a promise of new liberty. They could not revivify the poetic intuition of the Church in its youth, but they could fashion fine prose instead of debased. Conventional interpretation made room for the attempt to recover the original intention of the sacred writers; Calvin's commentaries in the terse, lucid Latin that a Frenchman could write so well, are brilliant examples of this new learning. Yet Calvin lost and added something in the stress of controversy, and presently both on the Protestant and Roman side an unnatural authority and character were attributed to the Bible. Its rich variety, the sweet mystery of language, the sacramental service of its human writers, all was forgotten; every word was read as matter of fact history and compelled to express matter of fact accuracy.

In the English Church at least, this popular travesty of inspiration was guarded against by the Articles of

Religion which asserted, gravely and charitably vindicating primitive liberty, that what Holy Scripture containeth is "all things necessary to salvation," and that "whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." No doubt other problems than our present ones were in the minds of those who framed that Article, but the "Declaration" prefixed to the Articles, in its restriction to "the literal and grammatical sense," clearly was intended to safeguard modern meanings in the antique words, whenever such modern meanings were natural ones. And it is perfectly natural to reflect that few questions of date or authorship in the Old Testament can be answered out of Scripture itself, and that even the more daring reasonings of New Testament critics are but seldom concerning matters "necessary to salvation." Modern criticism has caused some pain; sometimes, not surely as a rule, it has been arrogant or irreverent; it has been sometimes hasty, and of course its very scholarship implies that it is uncertain of "results" and perpetually advances by means of correction. But it can hardly be denied that it may appeal for its liberty to the Article and to the primitive Church. Nor can it be denied that it has gone far to revive interest in the Scriptures and, if not to confirm the comparatively modern form of faith which it found in possession, at least to prepare the way for a larger form which is also akin to the Apostolic.

Yet as with allegory, and the new learning of the Reformation era, so modern criticism has appeared to

degenerate from its first vital promise into mere analysis of documents and academic detail. For some years at least this has been threatening. But those who read the newest signs of the times will say that reaction has already set in. There are influences from without. Philosophy, the example of the natural sciences, are such invigorating influences. The character of our leading critics, the pathetic need of a generation which cares much, in spite of or because of great material hindrances, for the things necessary to salvation, are inner impulses that seem to be arising from the critical studies themselves, and all this is tending in the same direction. The studies of the critics began in the face of opposition, and one of the Articles of the English Church strengthened their position by its primitive and catholic good sense. They are now tolerated, and by many favoured; by some they are even appealed to for spiritual help. The issue is that their interest begins to be centred on that ideal interpretation of the whole Scriptures as one Gospel which is vindicated in the words of another Article: "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises."

The use of the Septuagint by the author of Hebrews suggests one other point; its influence on his language and style. Von Soden notices his rhetorical skill, and shews that it is a technical skill such as might be compared with the Greek rhetoric of the schools of his

day, and suggests that the Epistle is less a letter than an example of the formal oratory which might even then be heard in Christian communities, at least in Rome. But he also allows that it would be a remarkable example, and recognizes in its composition not only the general tradition of rhetoric, but in particular the peculiar character which the author's familiarity with the Septuagint has given it. "He is securely master of the Septuagint. Words and images from it crowd abundantly upon him in his own singular diction."¹

There is perhaps rather more to be said than that. Not only is the author's diction singularly his own. It is less like the literary prose of the century than Von Soden's description might suggest. It is easier, simpler, more natural. The sentences are shorter, more comfortable (for an English ear at least) to take in. This may be readily tested by reading a page or two of Dionysius of Halicarnassus on the "Attic" side, or Philo on the Jewish. And this ought to be remembered before we allow the suggestion about Christian oratory to impress us over much. The Epistle is not oratorical in any ordinary sense, though Christian oratory may have been more like it than pagan oratory was; for Christian oratory too would probably have been influenced by the Septuagint. For that seems important. This author certainly is a master in his use of the Septuagint, but he is moulded by it also. How far is that singular force, freshness, and simplicity of his due to the short, direct sentences of the Septuagint?

But that is part of a wider question. How far can

¹ *Hand-Commentar*, p. 7.

it be said that there is a common New Testament style? What are the causes which have combined to produce it? What is its relationship to the spoken and the literary language of the century? The answer seems to be that, in spite of marked differences within itself, the New Testament is written in a style of its own; that the Septuagint has had much to do with forming that style; that it represents an invigorating of the literary language by the spoken language; that the differences in the style of the several books might be measured by the varying proportions of common speech or literary rule in them; and that throughout the whole the governing power of more or less conscious art has been at work, an element in the process which was the more naturally accepted because its operation had from the first helped to shape the Greek of the Septuagint.¹

Dr. Adolf Deissmann sketches in his *Light from the Ancient East*, ch. ii., the changes of opinion about the character of New Testament Greek. Pagan controversialists once called it a boatman's idiom. The Christian apologists answered that its simplicity was their glory. Latin apologists however defended its artistic perfection. So did some reverent people in comparatively modern times. But that was impossible for classical scholars; they saw how different this Greek

¹ Cf. Swete, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, II. iv. p. 295: "While the colloquial Greek of Alexandria was their chief resource, they were also influenced, in a less degree, by the rise of the later literary style which was afterwards known as the *κοινή*." This indicates, as I suppose, not merely the difference between the ruder style of the Law and the more literary style of such a book as Job, but also that peculiarity in the language of books which no readable book is without—however simple or even careless it seem to be, it is not the language of conversation; literary art has induced order, or at any rate, a particular kind of order.

was from the Attic, and therefore isolated it and "raised it to the rank of a separate linguistic entity under the title of 'New Testament' Greek." Of late, however, the discovery of inscribed stones, papyri, and potsherds, has brought us back to the glad confession that "the boatman's idiom" was the true description. "The New Testament has been proved to be, as a whole, a monument of later colloquial Greek, and in the great majority of its component parts a monument of the more or less *popular* colloquial language." And again, ch. iii., "The texts composing it come from the souls of saints sprung from the people, and therefore the New Testament is the Bible for the many." Of course Dr. Deissmann distinguishes. The Epistle to the Hebrews seems to him "to hang in the background like an intruder among the New Testament company of popular books." There are some other Epistles which are not really letters, but more or less set, literary pieces; "the Epistle to the Hebrews gains immensely in importance if really considered as literature: it is historically the earliest example of Christian artistic literature. What had been shyly attempted in some other epistles has here been more fully carried out." But even so does he not press this popular, colloquial character of the New Testament as a whole too far? He supports his thesis with immense learning delightfully displayed. After the enjoyment of so rich and genial a piece of scholarship as this book it would be as ungrateful as it might be presumptuous to question the author's conclusions. What is meant by the question just asked is merely this: "popular and colloquial," if used in a strict sense does not quite sufficiently describe the

whole character of the New Testament. It may be that almost every word, phrase, and syntactical construction can be illustrated from the vulgar tongue of the papyri. There may be striking resemblances in points of style. But there remains a difference between the New Testament, even in its simplest parts, and these letters and inscriptions except in those careful examples where something like literary skill comes in. The New Testament is not composed of carelessly written letters; it does not reflect the diffuse, half-ungrammatical manner of ordinary conversation. Its language has undergone that discipline which makes proper book-style. It is so in all readable books. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Burns' poems, are written in the unsophisticated language of the people; but they are not written just as the people speak. Benvenuto Cellini wrote his memoirs in an exceedingly popular language, but those memoirs would not be the remarkable thing they are, if he had used no art to govern that language.

That is the main point. The New Testament owes a good deal to art. It is not the same thing as the artless letter of the papyri, nor as the speech of peasants. Our Lord and His disciples and those who wrote about Him and them in the New Testament were not peasants. Had they been He would have been able to use and direct that lot aright, and there are probably few men of rank, business or letters, who do not sincerely honour the peasant's outdoor life, endurance and simple depth of character. But it is not easy for peasants, it is harder still for narrowly educated tradesmen to write great prose. And the New Testament is very great prose;

in the Synoptic Gospels greatest of all. The truth is surely this. In the New Testament we read the language of common life raised to a very noble literary form by a more or less conscious art; in some parts of it, however, it would be more exact to say, an old literary form recreated by touch with the language of common life.¹ And the Septuagint had led the way. Its earliest versions, *e.g.* of the Law, come nearer perhaps than any version since to the contemporary language of the people, the rude Greek of the Hellenistic Jews in Alexandria. But there are literary touches, and throughout there is the artist's impress of order. Not in its choice of words, not in its syntax, but in the direct, terse sentence, carved to be easily comprehended in the synagogue, partly by the translator's conscious will, partly by the Hebraic brevity of his original,² a rough model was given, which

¹ Cf. Wendland, *Die Hellenistisch-Römische Kultur*, p. 31: "Die auf ein künstliches Sprachniveau gehobene Literatur ist den befruchtenden Berührungen mit der volkstümlichen Sprache entzogen." Also Jebb, Appendix to Vincent and Dickson's *Modern Greek*, p. 292: "The vocabulary of classical Greek is, in this Hellenistic phase, going through a furnace, and being recast by the moulding power of oral use." Jebb also says, "But while the Greek of the New Testament is colloquial, it is still the spoken language of the educated, and is not divided by any impassable gulf from the literary Common Dialect."

² Cf. Swete, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, pp. 297, 298: "In the works of Philo we have a cultured Hellenist's commentary on the earlier books of the LXX, and as he quotes his text *verbatim*, the student can discern at a glance the gulf which divides its simple manner, half Semitic, half colloquial, from the easy command of idiomatic Greek manifested by the Alexandrian exegete." Yet who that knows Plato, Philo, and the LXX, would not prefer the rough dawn of the LXX to the cloudy evening style of Philo?

Cf. Tatian, Or. 29: Συνέβη γραφαῖς τισιν ἐντυχεῖν βαρβαρικαῖς . . . καὶ μοι πεισθῆναι ταύταις συνέβη διὰ τε τῶν λέξεων τὸ ἄτυφον καὶ τῶν εἰπόντων τὸ ἀνεπιτήδευτον καὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς ποιήσεως τὸ εὐκατάληπτον καὶ τῶν μελλόντων προγνωστικὸν καὶ τῶν παραγγελμάτων τὸ ἐξάλσιον καὶ τῶν ὄλων τὸ μοναρχικόν. Quoted by Harnack in *Bible Reading in the Early Church*, p. 42. See also *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, i. p. 282, where Harnack comments

later translators of other Old Testament books, and afterwards Christians in their new writings, might approach, sometimes miss, and finally surpass.

The Christian writers so far surpassed it, that theirs is a new creation, at least in the same sense that Byzantine architecture was a new creation.

"We may assert," said Munro, "that in Lucretius' day the living Latin for all the higher forms of composition both prose and verse was a far nobler language than the living Greek . . . Hardly had Demosthenes and Aristotle ceased to live, when that Attic which had been gradually formed into such a noble instrument of thought in the hands of Aristophanes Euripides Plato and the orators, and had superseded for general use all the other dialects, became at the same time the language of the civilized world and was stricken with a mortal decay. It seems to have been too subtle and delicate for any but its wonderful creators."¹ "That which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto passing away," said our author. And as his "youthful covenant" rose from the decay of the Levitical forms, so out of that aged classical form of language rose the young style of the New Testament. In S. Mark we see it in its utmost simplicity. S. Matthew and S. Luke bring a rather more conscious art to bear. S. Paul had perhaps the on the same passage of Tatian: "In the first place, the *form* of this book (*i.e.* the LXX) made a deep impression, and it is characteristic of Tatian the Greek, though he would remain a Greek no longer, that its form is the first point which he singles out. The vigorous style of the prophets and psalmists captivated the man who had passed through the schools of rhetoric and philosophy. Vigour coupled with simplicity—this is what made the book seem to him so utterly different from those treatises and unwieldy tomes in which their authors made desperate efforts to attain clearness of thought upon questions of supreme moment."

¹ *Lucretius*, ed. 3, p. 306.

Greek university education of a Jewish gentleman; he talked well, and dictating his letters, came as near as the written word may to good colloquial speech. Blass found a rhythm in his letters which is not inconsistent with that process, and may have been part of the unconscious art with which he raised his common speech to the dignity of the Christian "style"; in Romans and Ephesians there is an added elaboration. In S. John's Gospel and Epistles, as in the early Septuagint, the influence of Hebraic simplicity seems apparent. The Apocalypse baffles classification; it seems a first attempt of that "John" who wrote it, rough but exceedingly splendid; we might compare it with such a vigorous, rude translation as we have in Codex D of our Epistle.

All these are on the popular side. They might be fore-runners of S. Ignatius or the *Didache*.¹ Perhaps they were too close to the Hebraistic² or Septuagintal *naivité* to satisfy even the Church at large,³

¹ If the *Didache* be, as the Dean of Wells has gone far at least to prove it, a comparatively late piece which describes a merely ideal state of things in the primitive Church, this imitation of the early style has an interesting significance. See his article in *JTS*, April 1912.

² This epithet has of course no reference to "Hebraisms," *i.e.* peculiarities in the use of prepositions, genitive cases, and special phrases, such as Mr. Moulton has shewn to be merely colloquial, and probably not derived from Hebrew at all. It indicates the terse, direct style, which being repeated in sentence after sentence by men who were familiar with the Septuagint, if not with the Hebrew Scriptures, does appear to be really connected with the use of Hebrew books. Cf. Jebb, Appendix to Vincent and Dickson, p. 291, "the style is to that of Plutarch much what the *ειρομένη λέξις* of Herodotus is to the *κατεστραμμένη λέξις* of mature Attic prose."

³ Cf. an article in *JTS*, Oct. 1912, by F. H. Colson on "τάξει in Papias." Mr. Colson shews that *τάξει*, in Papias' statement about S. Mark's Gospel had its technical sense of "rhetorical order, that ordering which will produce a satisfactory and readable work." S. Mark lacked *τάξις* because his Gospel, was incomplete at beginning and end, and because it was not written with a rhetorician's care for proportion—in one place superfluous (we of course call them "graphic") touches, in another but a line or two for the

much less those churchmen who were imbued in any degree with the secular skill in letters. On the other side stands Hebrews, pre-eminent in a group which also includes the Epistles of S. James and S. Peter, and those introductions which shew S. Luke writing in his own style. In Hebrews Von Soden points to the arrangement of its matter according to the rules of rhetoric.

Blass has analysed its regular interwoven rhythm.¹ No one can read the Epistle without recognizing its character of classical, or if not classical at least of the best Hellenistic diction. Yet the contrast with contemporary examples is more striking than the affinity. The Christian simplicity, directness, sincerity, runs through it. In part this may be accounted for in the way of craftsmanship; study of the Septuagint has affected the writer. In larger part there is another cause; its subject is a greater one than the contemporary philosophers had touched. And that is but a partial way of putting it. With more completeness we must say that

whole narrative of the Temptation. This operated against the popularity of this Gospel in the second century, and Mr. Colson adds: "such a judgement probably reflects the feeling of Christians at all times. While it is true that the very defects of Mark's *ἑξερυσία* commend him to those who have the spirit of historical criticism, because they bear the signs of primitiveness and simplicity, it is none the less true that they weigh against him with the general reader. Mark has never been a favourite: note, for instance, his practical exclusion from our series of liturgical Gospels. And if I am not mistaken this is largely because he has the characteristics mentioned above."

¹ (*Barnabas*) *Brief an die Hebräer, Text mit Angabe der Rythmen, herausgegeben von Friederich Blass*. Halle, 1903. This device had been practised by Isocrates, in whom a certain trick of style may also be observed which appears rather excessively in Hebrews—a tendency to drop into iambic metre. In xii. 13 the Oxyrhynchus papyrus must now be added to the authorities which break the hexameter by giving *ποιεῖτε*. So WH text, with *ποιήσατε* in the margin.

it springs out of a new life ; it is a new creation in style as it is in meaning.

And that perhaps is one reason why this revival of Greek in so many a form had little effect upon the future of the language. In a real sense the Apostolic style is part of the Apostolic inspiration.

It lingers in the Apostolic Fathers, though even there a difference is perceptible. Clement, and the Homily too called 2 Clement, have much of the New Testament simplicity ; but Clement falls away from the clear beauty of Hebrews and if he reminds us of the New Testament it is rather of such a part of it as 2 Peter. Notice for instance the delicacy of Hebrews in the use of resonant compound words, and the comparatively reckless abundance of Clement. Nearest to the line of true descent from Septuagint and New Testament stands Ignatius ; both in words and in thoughts he shews what looks like a Semitic ancestry. Indeed this rare style we speak of is no common colloquial idiom, it has something of that other-worldly and ideal simplicity which was the heritage of the Jew and can so hardly be transformed into the conditions of progress.

Yet another reason for its brief life may also be noticed. Wendland shews how the whole movement of the age in Greek literature was towards "Atticism," and how Dionysius of Halicarnassus "with triumphant words over the victory won that cause"; a romantic ideal was formed that looked backward, and it was formed to last. Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, and it mattered not that a victory in style was denied it. Yet we cannot but dream of what might have been. Here was a new creation like Dante's of

Italian. For such a Greek, so popular yet so sincere and strong, what a future there might have been. Some would answer that even in the New Testament the supreme good taste was not the authors' own, but due to a Christian scholarship of revision at Alexandria. It seems more likely that at least the coarser touches in the "Western text" should be reckoned among the other indications of this inspired style being above the general comprehension. However that may be it begat no posterity, unless we trace something of it in the beautiful language of the Greek Liturgies. Origen had a style of his own, as unaffected and often as vigorous, but quite without its ease and inexpressible charm. His was a scholar's natural running talk, and perhaps for once we really do hear in his writings a colloquial, or at least a professorial, speech untempered in reduction to book form. Something of the same freshness returns whenever we meet with an author who is quite natural, as for instance Epictetus. Even Lucian in quite another manner has some of that natural ease and charm. But he might rather be compared with Erasmus writing good classical Latin in the sixteenth century.

EPILOGUE

THIS Epistle is a commentary upon the apostolic tradition that He who was known on earth as Jesus is the Christ of God, and that being the Christ He is very God of very God. The method by which it brings further clearness to this astounding truth is the method of analogy. But before we have read far we perceive that analogy as the author uses it is a far more powerful instrument than it commonly appears. His analogy is part of a large faith in the divine character of the whole of visible life; "the powers of the world to come invade the present, and already move towards the victory which shall be hereafter"; this sentence from Francis Paget's Essay on Sacraments in *Lux Mundi* might be a paraphrase of Heb. vi. 4 f. Thus not by an arbitrary scheme of fanciful resemblances or suggestions, but in view of the eternal existence in God of all that God has created for goodness, he sets the days of our Lord's flesh before us and bids us recognize in their supreme goodness the sign, pledge, and instrument of His eternal perfection. Humiliation, limitation, he shews, make for not against that recognition; for (at least since our Lord himself opened men's minds to see it) supreme goodness comes to its own when, not merely power or glory, but life itself is lost for love's sake.

As the author took a phrase from the Old Testament to define his theory according to the fashion of his day,

so we have taken a phrase from the current language of theology to describe in brief our interpretation of his theory; we have called this principle the sacramental principle. It was perhaps Dr. Paget who suggested the term, for the instructiveness of that fine essay comes just from this: it is on "Sacraments" not "The Sacraments," and it shews the spiritual value of the instituted, church sacraments by setting them in the midst of the universal sacramental order.

Some might prefer to find another word. The same essay might suggest another word. It is from Wordsworth and the poets that Dr. Paget draws his illustrations, illustrations which are as religious and solemn as they are fit. In fact the broad significance of "sacramental" might be best indicated by setting "poetic" over against "philosophic." "The poet," if we may give a slight turn to Dr. Peake's meaning by isolating some words of his about Job, "the poet is an Oriental, with far less care for pure reasoning."

Now the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a sacramentalist or poet (whichever title be preferred); he reaches truth by vision rather than by the severity of logical thought; his thorough-going and earnest delight in this method marks his distinct place among the writers of the New Testament. But in bringing this study of the Epistle to a close, in looking back upon it, and the older Jewish books from which it sprang, and the contemporary books among which it stands, do we not feel that its poetic, sacramental character makes it different from the rest only in degree, not in kind? Here indeed is the first of three main impressions which our study

leaves upon us, viz. that all expression of Christian faith must be more akin to the vision of poetry than to the exactness of philosophy; it is remarkable that the earliest Christian creed, in 1 Tim. iii. 16, is in verse. This appears true whether we consider dogmatic penetration or moral vigour. Philosophy moves within invincible barriers, poetry transcends them; philosophy is most sincere, and therefore in its own sphere most moral, when it shuts its ears to those emotions in which the larger morality has its life, but poetry apart from intense morality is mere literature. "It is given sometimes to a poet to sink a shaft, as it were, into the very depths of the inner life: to penetrate its secret treasures, and to return, Prometheus-like, with a gift of fire and of light to men. The venturesome words that record such a moment of penetration and insight never lose their power: they seem to have caught something of the everlasting freshness of that world of which they speak: and one man after another may find in them, at some time of need or gladness or awakening, the utterance of thoughts which else he might have been too shy or too faint-hearted to acknowledge even to himself." So wrote Dr. Paget of the poets, but he might seem to be describing the Holy Scriptures and the Creeds. He is in fact indicating a certain limitation to which all must submit who would think, speak, or discuss concerning the mysteries of faith. Yet the limitation itself becomes a faculty—a faculty for eternity—when it is submitted to. And such submission makes for reverence and peace as well as for understanding.

The second impression that remains upon us is of the hopeful, forward look of the Epistle. This again is

characteristic of the whole New Testament, but it is especially remarkable here because the Epistle is so largely engaged with the renunciation of a valued past. We may or may not be right in our explanation of the circumstances of that renunciation; that critical enquiry does not after all affect the broad fact; this is an Epistle of renunciation. But that would be a poor description of it. The renunciation appears as a new start with high hopes; there is no looking back. Now this forward look is the healthy state of faith whether creed, conduct, or organization is considered. It is the temper of the New Testament, but it seems to be a difficult temper to continue. At least it seems to have been much oftener the habit of the Church in later times to look back upon the first six or the first three centuries, or upon the apostolic age, as golden ages, to be regretted, or if possible recovered. Whether the Dean of Wells be right in his suggestion that the *Didache* is no contemporary witness to a mainly charismatic ministry, but the later dream of an imaginary prime, remains to be proved. But the persistent recurrence of such interpretative dreams of history is, so far as analogies go, very much on his side. This kind of feeling is exquisitely expressed in Mr. Thomas Hardy's *Dynasts* in the scene where the spirits look upon the coronation rite in Milan Cathedral:

Spirit of the Pities.

What is the creed that these rich rites disclose?

Spirit of the Years.

A local thing called Christianity,
Which the wild drama of the wheeling spheres
Includes, and divers other such, in dim,
Pathetical, and brief parentheses,

Beyond whose reach, uninfluenced, unconcerned,
 The systems of the suns go sweeping on
 With all their many-mortalled planet-train
 In mathematic roll unceasingly.

Spirit of the Pities.

I did not recognize it here, forsooth ;
 Though in its early, loving-kindly days
 Of gracious purpose it was much to me.

That puts the natural yearning strongly, and so does the Epistle. Not indeed in its tender memories of the ancient Jewish cult. There is a tenderness about that, but no strength of regret. All is described, book fashion, from the Old Testament and is austere put aside as a shadowy unreality. But it is different with its memories of the early generous zeal of the readers, and still more with its glorious memory of the days of the Lord's flesh. Once or twice in our study we have been carried away by that memory, and have looked back upon the ideal Gospel days as though they were the most completely Christlike days that the world can ever see. So far as we followed Baron von Hügel, with his admiration for the rich theology of the Synoptic Gospels, we were doubtless right in this. If otherwise, perhaps not. The Epistle is the precursor of all the "imitations" of Christ that have ever been taught. But the Epistle itself uses even "the days of His flesh" only as a means for the fuller and more loyal following of the exalted Captain of Salvation when He manifested His presence in a time of increased complexity and trouble, and therefore of increased nearness to reality. The "early loving-kindly days" can only be really recovered when they are faced with the loving-kindness of courage as they come to

meet us in the growing future. And this holds for doctrine as well as for discipline.

The last of our three abiding impressions is perhaps the most serious. Let us approach a definition of it by putting two quotations in juxtaposition. The first of these quotations shall be from *The Dynasts* again :

Chorus of Intelligences.

The PRIME, that willed ere wareness was,
Whose brain perchance is Space, whose Thought its laws,
Which we as threads and streams discern,
We may but muse on, never learn.

The second shall be from Baron von Hügel's *Eternal Life* :

“ But the element of inexorable Fate, of impersonal Law, and of opaque *Thing*, must be placed somewhere in the totality of my life, even of my spiritual life; and placed in the middle-distance of this my life, and used rightly by me, so largely still a mere natural individual in the foreground, I can touch and pass through that element, ever again, as through an awakening and purifying river, out on to the background and heights, having become thus, more and more, a spiritual person.”

Thus then the sternly philosophic, realistic chorus of “Intelligences”—mere Intelligences or awful Intelligences, as our mood may choose to term them,—and the religiously-philosophic idealist, alike recognize “the element of inexorable Fate.” To the one that element is in the foreground, blocking farther vision; to the other it is in middle-distance, a means of progress to—not after all, even for him, to knowledge,—but to the life of a spiritual person. Sacrament or poetry is the best means for religious expression, but it is not logical proof, nor

does it remove the terrible "opaque Thing" in the life which men have to live. The churchman as well as the "intelligences" admits this.

In the face of such admission any faith which is real faith must indeed insist upon that condescending might of Godhead which is thus defined in the sacramental poetry of the Creed: "Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven." But on the other hand how terrible it would be if any infringement upon the doctrine, so much insisted on in this Epistle, of the perfect manhood of the Lord Jesus, forbade us to believe that He, "the compassionate," shared our humility and "godly fear" in the presence of that "element of inexorable Fate."

AN EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE.

NOTE.—This *Exposition* should be read with the *English of the Revised Version* or the *Greek of Westcott and Hort* by the side of it. The *A. V.* represents the *Textus Receptus*, or later form of the *Greek text*, which is not followed in the *Exposition*; and, since minor variations from it are not specially noticed, difficulties may arise if the *Exposition* is applied to that text either in *English* or in *Greek* form.

Nestlé's *Greek text*, published by the *British and Foreign Bible Society*, or *The Reviser's Greek Text*, published by the *Clarendon Press*, will also be suitable; the best edition of the latter is *Dr. Souter's Novum Testamentum Graece* with an *apparatus criticus* of selected readings. *Westcott and Hort's Greek Testament* will however be found most convenient because the *Exposition* is based on its divisions into paragraphs and sub-paragraphs, and because it marks by distinct type the quotations from and allusions to the *Old Testament* which are so important for the interpretation of this *Epistle*. The smaller edition is not only cheaper and more handy, but it gives at the end a brief and simple account of the principles of textual criticism which will explain the paramount importance of using a pure text, if the true meaning of the apostolic writings is to be sought.

Greek words are sparingly used in the *Exposition*. A translation is generally added when they are used; where that is lacking a reference to the *Revised Version* will clear up any difficulty for those who do not read *Greek*.

14
Son of God, Christ: who is He whom we thus name
and who has inherited such great titles from
Israel's heroes?

One who seems far lowlier than they. But His
glory was revealed in humiliation, and His
humiliation was the means of His highpriestly
sympathy with men.

For He shared their trials that, priestlike, He
might bring them to God.

Think of Him as Highpriest and you will never give
Him up. Hold fast to Him in your approach-
ing trial and you will know what His priestly
salvation really is.

As Highpriest; but not in the mechanical line
of Aaron. That shadowy ordinance is fading
ineffectually away before our eyes. Rather as
Highpriest in that eternal line of world-wide
ancestry and living growth which the Psalmist
symbolically named, "after the order of
Melchizedek."

Jesus, our Lord, standing on the Godward side
of all men, and sacrificing His life for love of
men, is the evident fulfiller of all that line of
loving priestly life which has been throughout
all history the visible sacrament of Godhead on
earth.

Believe then that He as Highpriest has opened the way for you to the presence of God.

The visible shame of Calvary was the sacrament of His entrance into the sanctuary of God's presence on our behalf. It remains for us to make the sacrament our own and to follow Him.

Remember your courage in former trials. Imitate the courageous faith of your forefathers. Follow Jesus your acknowledged Lord in the course He has run before you—do that hard duty which is now specially set before you.

Break old ties. Go forth to Him outside the camp. Enter the city of God.

Following Jesus you shall be united with the Christ.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE

THE Epistle must be read as a kind of treatise called forth by letters or conversations which we have not seen. There may have been a covering letter addressed to one of the group of friends for whom the Epistle was intended, but the last chapter itself passes into the form of a regular letter, and throughout there are touches of intimacy which remind us that after all the treatise is a letter, while they often add to the difficulty of interpretation to those who are strangers to the private interests of these friends. A trial, *πειρασμός*, is threatening or already touching them. The author exhorts them to do their duty in spite of any loss it may involve. But the question has arisen: "Which way does duty really lie?" And a more insidious question: "Is it worth while; what is this Jesus to whom, perhaps too hastily, we have given allegiance?" The author answers, or perhaps has answered before, and is now fulfilling a promise in sending this elaboration of his earlier suggestion: "I can make you understand by using a symbol. Consider Him as our Highpriest and let me shew how perfectly He satisfies all that the symbol suggests, how deep it carries us into the reality of things." The theme of the Highpriesthood is worked out in v.—x. 18. The argument is the argument from analogy, which can indeed never be conclusive, and is here preparatory

to a venture of faith. The argumentative core of the Epistle is therefore enclosed by a prelude, i.-iv., on the one side, which prepares for the argument and disposes the mind to enter on it favourably; on the other side, x. 19-xiii., by an exhortation to faith that shall realize itself in action.

The reasoning of the Epistle is not so loose that it needs to claim extraordinary allowances; it is a condition of such an argument that it should need to be entered upon sympathetically, as well as that it should be clinched by practical testing. The author indeed puts it forward in no meek spirit of apology. Again and again he breaks in with stern appeals to the moral consciousness of his friends, their sense of honour at its deepest. Even if all else were indistinct, he seems to insist, loyalty to Jesus once yielded cannot be broken.

And this last consideration has a reflex influence on the argument, for loyalty to Jesus includes holding fast to the confession they have made that He is the Christ (cf. iii. 14, x. 23), and it is in this Christship that the connexion is found between Jesus the Son of God and those who were named sons of God in the Old Testament, between the final manifestation of God in man and the earlier, incomplete manifestations. The cogency of the argument of the Epistle only appears when it is remembered that its readers were not supposed to need a proof of Jesus being Christ, though they did need to learn the deeper significance of their confession (cf. vi. 1).

PART I.—CHAPTER I.—IV.

PRELUDE

The whole prelude falls into three divisions :

A. I.—II. 4. The eternal Son of God continually manifested in the world.

B. II. 5—18. Jesus perfected in manhood to be the Highpriest of men.

C. III. 1—IV. 16. Jesus Christ the Son of God and great Highpriest with God.

A. ends with exhortation. *C.* passes into exhortation from which the argument emerges again in a new form ; then closes with an invitation to *draw near*, thus striking one of the notes of the Epistle's common chord—priest, offering, propitiation, access.

A. (i). i. 1—4. The author expresses his thought throughout in what may be termed a picturesque rather than a philosophical manner. He brings images before the eye of the mind ; indeed the whole Epistle is an elaboration of one great image of this kind—Jesus Christ entering the presence of God as a priest entering a sanctuary. By bearing this in mind we shall best understand the opening chapter. The first words, *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως* ("by divers portions and in divers manners"), suggest by their very sound a great rolling sea whose waves are the voices of all those in whom God has spoken in time past to Israel. Now all those various, onward-rolling voices have been gathered up in the voice of Him who is styled "Son" (i. 2). But this speaking is the commentary on the actual history. It is the chorus of the drama ; something that

has been done is the main thing, and though in His words the Son completes the line of the prophets, and though reference will again be made from time to time to his words (*e.g.* ii. 3, ii. 12, x. 5), yet the Epistle is chiefly concerned with Him as completing another line, a line of action rather than of teaching, to which kings and leaders rather than prophets or lawgivers belonged, those eminences in Israel's history who received the name of Son or Christ of God.

Hence verse 2 introduces another picture. We seem to be set in heaven itself contemplating how God the invisible continually manifests himself through One who is the light ever streaming from the hidden glory, the expression of the Godhead as the figure carved upon a seal is the expression of the idea in the mind of the artist who carved it, and who also impresses his idea by means of that visible figure on other objects (3). For our eyes are turned swiftly from heaven through the whole universe to earth, as we are made to realize in a few lines how this effluence and figure is truly a Person, as really in personal and subordinate relation to God as He is eternally one with Him in origin and operation; the Heir appointed by God to gather to himself and complete all things just as He has gathered and completed prophecy, and who naturally does so since this all, whether measured by space or by time, has been made by God through Him (2). We see Him bearing all onwards to this goal effectually commissioned to so majestic a task, and in the course of this onward motion we behold how He has worked on earth the priestly purification of men's sins, and has then ascended to the most royally glorious place in heaven, the same Person

as He ever has been, yet with an added honour; one part at least of the inheritance has been taken by Him never to be let go again—the name of Son—which indeed sums up all that would have been too vaguely suggested if the author had not anticipated and defined his picture by its title, “in the essential Son whom,” before setting it before us.

A. (ii.) i. 5–14. In the opening verses the whole vast picture has been flashed upon us at once; time emerging (as it were) out of eternity, God’s work through the Son rushing onwards to its first resting-point, whence the new era begins with which this Epistle is to be practically concerned (cf. ii. 5). Henceforth this effluent light and character of God is clearly recognized as a Person, who rules the still onward-moving world from His throne in heaven. It is not that He has become a Person now for the first time, any more than that His further action or “coming” will change Him in the future (cf. xiii. 8). But it is only by analogy from the visible life men live that they can rise to any clear conception of eternal truths, and as in the past it was through God’s operations in the visible world that men could realize that the Living God rather than the Absolute was His proper title, so that distinction of Persons in the Godhead by which God is the Living God, could only be clearly grasped by men when the man Jesus had come into being and the second Person of the Holy Trinity had taken His inheritance to himself by indissoluble union with that man. Moreover when His action in the world could be only vaguely expressed, as by the phrase *φέρων τὰ πάντα*, “upholding or bearing forward all things,” there was a danger that He, the author of life and movement,

should be confused with His instruments, and therefore the section which now follows has a double purpose, to shew that the Son is not to be, and in the Old Testament never was classed with Angels, as well as to establish the main point, that He was, in actual personal form, to be recognized in Israel's history; the name He has inherited is an inheritance that He found there.

To take the secondary point first: the Angels, the mention of whom makes the bridge of transition from *v.* 4 to 5, had formed no doubt a subject of speculation among the Jews for many generations. There is however no sign that the readers were apt to run into extravagances like those against which the Epistle to the Colossians was directed; the Angels throughout this Epistle are the Angels of the canonical books not of the apocryphal literature. We may suppose that the readers agreed with the writer in his theory of Angels, a theory which represented them as corresponding nearly to what we (with a meaner religious imagination) call forces of nature—they are made by God winds and fires (7). This theory did not detract from the angelic glory—*xii.* 22 ff. disproves that; it deepens our awe in the contemplation of nature, and it is not surprising that Origen and Newman adopted it. But it does divide them from those beings of whom we can form any distinct idea as persons. To that class man does belong—his Self is his great possession (*cf.* *x.* 34); and from the relationships and activities of human life we are able to rise by analogy to some conception of the divine character and operations. We are not however able to rise by the same analogy to a conception of the character of Angels. As Newman says, the Angels and the brutes are mysteries

on either side of us. Hence the author, wishing to establish the Son as a Person in our minds, distinguishes Him from the angelic powers by whom His creation and advancing of all things are carried on; but in doing this he is able to do more, and establishes at the same time His actual connexion with man, and first, with the chosen race of Israel. For after the swift glance over the whole course of creation and redemption (1-4), we are now made to turn again and with more leisurely gaze to contemplate this effluent light striking upon certain eminences in Israel's history; this seal impressing its character on now a king, now the whole people of Israel (5 f.); then manifested, in contrast to the mutability of the shifting forms of angelic power (7), in the steadfastness of the King whose throne is God (8 f.), and in the divine energy which abides unchanged beneath the changing garment of nature (10-12). Finally, having brought to perfection all that human royalty promised, and having swept all through the curve of visible life on earth, this divine Person is contemplated as having entered anew the presence of God, where, in virtue of the inheritance of manhood He has assumed, not detracting from but perfecting His divinity thereby, He can be described as enthroned in kingly fashion, ruling over the world in a manner intelligible to the thoughts of men, which are bound by laws of time and space. Thus He rules till the complete victory of salvation shall be achieved (13). He rules "enthroned in the centre"; the spiritual, wind-like Angels are sent forth therefrom continually, as sacred servants from the royal sanctuary to minister for His destined companions in the divine perfection that is named salvation.

A. (iii.) ii. 1-4. Here the author pauses to interpose a solemn appeal to the readers' sense of duty, no less than to their sense of peril. The transition is made, as is usual in the Epistle, somewhat artificially. Because the Angels are less than the Son, therefore it is a duty to give more earnest heed to an utterance which came through the Son than to one—the Law—which came through Angels. But the appeal breaks through the logic. It is not yet proved that He whom the author calls "the Lord" is the Son of whom he has been writing hitherto. Personal loyalty supplies for the moment the place of proof. Besides this, there is the experience they have had of the actual working of the salvation their Lord proclaimed; the signs of God's presence in the Christian life. The argument will presently be resumed, but for the moment there is no need of formal proof; the readers know Him too well of whom all this is being written.

Some have thought that the word spoken by Angels means the message sent by angelic visitors to various persons in the Old Testament, such as Abraham and Balaam. But this would not very well suit the larger view of the nature of Angels which has been suggested in ch. i., whereas the traditional explanation of the storm in which the Law was given at Sinai, as being a ministration of Angels, exactly suits that view; the Angels were winds and flames there. Moreover the same verse (2) seems to contain the remarkable idea of this "word" becoming confirmed in the actual ministration of justice, the confirmation of the law by practice, the perfection of the code by the continued developement of case-law. This of course does fit the

Law of Sinai. Indeed modern investigations into the developement of that Law seem so curiously foreshadowed by the words, that the explanation might be suspected of bringing merely modern notions into an ancient document. But the author is so often curiously modern. He writes at the end of an age, and the first words of his letter lent themselves naturally as a motto to those critics of the Old Testament who realized most vividly that they too were passing from an older age of interpretation to a new. So again the verses that follow (3, 4) present a like picture of the developement of the Gospel message, as a "salvation" which took a beginning of expression through the Lord; was sketched by Him, and confirmed up to the readers' own time not merely by repetition, but by a continued divine witness in acts of power and distributions of Holy Spirit from God to men. Once more this seems too like a modern tracing of the process by which the Gospel was carried on into the apostolic theology by stress of circumstances and inspired reflexion. But our author actually is influenced throughout by thoughts not unlike these modern ones. He too has laboured to assimilate the teaching of S. Paul with a more primitive idea, and it is with an impending developement of doctrine or at least of its expression, that he is largely occupied in this letter. Yet he is confident that no developement can mean a new Gospel, and the stress is on "steadfast," "confirmed," "lest we drift away"; cf. iii. 14, iv. 2, 12 ff., vi. 1, 19, x. 26, xii. 27 f., xiii. 8,

B. ii. 5-18. In this section the earthly life of the man Jesus is put before us as the preparation for that

priestly act of His which, accomplished by His dying, will be fully dealt with presently. The Angels are again mentioned, but chiefly as forming a convenient introduction to the quotation from Ps. viii. It is expressly stated both in 5 and 16 that the business in hand is not connected with Angels but with men; the new world with which the Epistle deals is "the inhabited world," the world of men. Hitherto the new world has been in the future, a world hoped for. Now it will appear that the opposition between things present and things hoped was not the true opposition. The hope is the reality of things as they are, a reality about to be revealed in the approaching trial for which this Epistle is an encouragement. The opposition is vividly expressed by the words of a Psalmist. Who he was, and whether he had any particular man in view, matters not. The point is that he recognizes how small and feeble man is in comparison with the huge universe, and yet he calls God to witness that his faith is well founded; God really has crowned man with glory, and appointed him master of all. That mastery the author says cannot even yet be seen by ordinary sight, and this part of the problem he leaves alone for the present; he has already given a hint of its solution in i. 13, "till I make thine enemies, etc." But to the contemplative eye one man may be seen, standing as a figure in the picture of "the end of these days," crowned with glory in preparation for death. The difficulty had been to reconcile apparent, actual humiliation with faith in the glory of man. In the life of Jesus there was a moment when all His earlier humiliation reached a climax; nothing remained but the certainty of a shameful death.

This might seem to strangers a mere necessity ; to those who knew, it was a glorious act, a heroic choice, a purpose of self-sacrificing love. The moment of utter humiliation was the moment of the completed act of will, cf. v. 9, x. 10. The humiliation was the glory, and the answer to the Psalmist's riddle was found. The Psalmist, it will be noted, had not put the glory and mastery in the future ; that was a turn which Jewish apocalyptists had given to faith. He had simply set down the actual present contradiction in life, and recorded his faith in the harder side of the paradox. Now that faith is justified in the glory through humiliation of Jesus. The world of men is the world to come.

This brings us to the end of verse 9. But that verse closes by declaring a remarkable purpose of Jesus. He meant to die on behalf of every one. How could that be? The question will need the whole Epistle to answer it. Meanwhile the author is content to suggest two partial explanations. First, it could be "by the grace of God," by God's choosing that it should be. This is not a mere shelving of the difficulty. It is a necessary preface to all that shall be said later, and rules throughout the argument. The search for truth must start from man's life, from things known ; but the answer to the search, the truth itself, comes from God—" 'tis Revelation what thou thinkst Discourse." But secondly, it is not an unreasonable preface. For if the Psalmist's faith was right, if there is a glory in life and a goal to the universe, and a way of rescue from the apparent misery of things, it was befitting the character of the God of such a universe, to appoint a leader along that way and to bring that leader's enter-

prise to perfection. And it would also befit His character to do this in the manner that the history of man shews to be natural; by allowing him to share the dangers, trials, disabilities, in a word the sufferings, of those He was to save. It is a law of life that the consecrator should always be of one kind with those who are to be consecrated. This new word "consecrated" prepares for the title "Highpriest" in *v.* 17, which in turn prepares for the fuller answer to the whole question that is to be worked out in the body of the Epistle. Three quotations are made. One is from a Psalm which describes the power of sympathy gained from suffering in words which all who knew the life of Jesus would feel to be specially applicable to Him. The application does not necessarily carry with it any assumption that the Psalmist was consciously foretelling the events of that life; here, as in the quotation from Ps. xl. in *x.* 5-7, words are used which quite properly might have been uttered by our Lord about himself. This use of the Psalm colours the other two quotations, which are from Isaiah. In these too the readers would find the thought of their Lord suggested. Yet in none of these quotations is minute stress laid on the special circumstances in which the words were originally spoken. It is enough for the purpose to notice that a leader and consecrator of old time, whose words and acts have become part of the sacred history of Israel, did insist upon the common weakness and the common need he shared with his followers—he called himself their brother, he called them his little children. So Jesus, purposing to destroy the spiritual power that made death horrible and linked it with the terrors of conscience, took share

with His little children in all the essential weakness and apparent grossness of humanity. A base, material task it might seem; certainly different from the ethereal angelic visitations. It was; and therefore He who essayed it had to pay the debt of His courageous love and touch the lowest depths of relationship. For His purpose was so high; and glory in humiliation, height in lowness, is the secret of salvation. He meant to become their Highpriest, searching the depths of humanity and rising thence Godward,—to the end that He might deal as a Priest deals with the sins of a people for forgiveness and renewal.¹

Formally this section follows the last, being connected with it by "for," and the renewed mention of the Angels. But really it is a fresh start on a line that converges with ch. i. The Epistle opened with a poet's guess at the explanation of the history of the universe (i. 1-4). This was illustrated and to some extent confirmed by certain facts of ancient history recorded in Israel's sacred books. Here the author takes his stand on earth and among the events of his own time, and shews how remarkably Jesus, a man about whom he and his readers are at least well informed, answered to the yearning faith in humanity that a Psalmist had expressed. In the next chapter the two converging lines will meet when Jesus is entitled Christ. Meanwhile His earthly life alone is dealt with. There is no thought, or at least no expressed thought, here of one who is God and greater than all, being humiliated by becoming a man. The humiliation of Jesus in this chapter is the same in kind as the humilia-

¹ Cf. ἀρκέειν γὰρ οἶμαι κἀντὶ μυρίων μίαν
ψυχὴν τὰδ' ἐκτίνουσαν ἦν εὐνοῦς παρῆ.—Soph. O. C. 498.

tion of other men, of such ordinary men as the Psalmist spoke of. Whether "a little lower than angels" refers (as in the original of the Psalm) to comparative glory, or (as it might be taken here) to humiliation, at least it means the same both in *v.* 7, and in *v.* 9—what the Psalmist's man was, that in all respects is Jesus. Yet He is also styled "Captain of Salvation," and it is evident that the author expects his friends to acknowledge that in some very important manner Jesus shewed himself superior to all other men. What this peculiar excellence was is never fully explained in the Epistle. His sinlessness, *iv.* 15, *vii.* 26, is definitely claimed, but little more description is attempted. The fact is that this excellence is what every "Life of Jesus" has attempted to make clear, and attempted in vain. In the Gospels this is not attempted; and the impression made is the more vivid. Next to the Gospels this Epistle conveys the same impression more vividly than does any other book, and it does so by a like reticence. In our effort to feel the effect of the author's argument we must remember this. Beside the formal arguments, the immediate proximity of the memory of the Lord swayed the first readers.

It must be noticed how strictly the outlook is limited in this section to the earthly life of Jesus before the death on the Cross. The syntax of the Greek in *v.* 9 compels us to recognize the "suffering of death" as the object of the "crowning," not the crowning as the consequence of the death. In other words the crowning marks the victim, or the hero going gallantly to his contest, not the victorious king. Enthronement not crowning is the sign of royal exaltation in this Epistle,

as in ancient thought generally. But the purpose that ran through those "days of His flesh" is distinctly expressed. All looks forward; "for the suffering of death," "in order that He might destroy," "in order that He might become," "for the purpose of making propitiation." The Cross is there, but just beyond the horizon as yet. It is not discussed, but every thought runs out to it. And indeed in the last two verses even the Cross is passed in this anticipation. Perhaps the tense of *ἰλάσκεσθαι* ("to be making propitiation"), certainly the tense of *πέπονθεν* ("hath suffered and retains the effect of suffering," a phrase like "Christ crucified"), carry us into the continuing present. Whatever "propitiation" may be found to mean, it seems to include the continued aid of Him, who having suffered abides "a sufferer" for ever, towards those who need unceasing aid in their "stern trials" (*τοῖς πειραζομένοις*).

C. iii. 1-iv. 16. This section brings together the converging lines of ch. i. and ii., by shewing that Jesus, who stood out so pre-eminently in ii. as the leader in man's salvation, belongs to the line of those leaders who were referred to as sons of God in i., leaders whose title, Son, He who is the effluence and character of God has taken to Himself by inheritance. He belongs to this line because to Him, as to them, the title Christ is assigned (iii. 6). Then the readers are urged to shew their loyalty in the immediate crisis to Him whom they have already saluted as Christ. The urgency of the appeal is driven home by a quotation from Ps. xcv. beginning "To-day" (iii. 7, iv. 7). The last line of the quotation yields another thought, that of "the rest of God," which is complementary to the former thought

of immediate and strenuous action (iv. 3-11), and the elaboration of these two thoughts leads to a vindication of the author's method of interpretation, which is interfused (as indeed is the whole section) with warning and appeal (iv. 12, 13). Finally the result of the whole preliminary argument is summed up (iv. 14-16) in the recitation, with deepened significance, of the "brethren's confession"—Jesus, the Son of God, our tempted yet sinless Highpriest.

Thus this whole section falls into five divisions, each of which may be marked by its own characteristic word:

- (a) iii. 1-6, Christ.
- (β) iii. 7-iv. 2, To-day.
- (γ) iv. 3-11, Rest.
- (δ) iv. 12, 13, Word.
- (ε) iv. 14-16, Highpriest.

(a) iii. 1-6. The picture sketched in the last chapter of the Master, beloved and wonderful in the patience of a divine purpose, leads the author to address his friends in terms of deeper affection than before, yet terms which at the same time recall the allegiance they have professed and the immeasurable height of its promise. He sums up what he has said about the Master in two strong, clear words significant of the whence and whither of His earthly life; He is sent from God, and as Highpriest He goes into the presence of God. And he bids them consider this human Lord—whose image haunts their minds—more diligently than has been their wont. His purpose is to help them to understand more perfectly what they mean by their profession "Jesus is the Christ."

This title Christ, the Lord's Anointed, has been the distinctive title of Israel's kings, sometimes of Israel itself as God's chosen people, those kings and that people of whom mention was made in ch. i. Since those days of old, from such beginnings, the idea of the Christ had developed. The developement had not always been wholesome, and now perhaps the very danger that beset the readers was lest they should forsake the Christ they had acknowledged in the vain hope of completer satisfaction in some revolutionary leader of the nation who should revive the false ideal of Christship for denying which their Lord had suffered death. He wishes therefore to explain what is the essential quality of Christship, and he attempts this (after his usual manner) by a comparison. The comparison is with Moses. It has been prepared for by the word "faithful," which was used in the last chapter to sum up Jesus' loyalty and trustworthiness in carrying out the promise made to mankind in Ps. viii. That word now serves to introduce a quotation from Numbers about Moses which sets him (as it might seem) side by side with Jesus; both are faithful. But another expression in the same passage suggests a difference. "Faithful in the house" may be said of one who belongs to the number of servants of whom a household is composed. For all the greatness of Moses that is how he may be spoken of. He was as a servant whose particular duty was to be a witness to something in the future which he did not himself apprehend (cf. Joh. viii. 56). Never was that other name applied to him, which became part of Israel's constitution when the monarchy was introduced, and belonged to those kings who were saluted as sons of God—the name Christ.

They were set over the house not in it, as being of founder's kin not servants. This distinction is to be observed in all houses, says the author, and the analogy holds; there is the same distinction in the universal house founded by God. Over it, of its founder's kin, is one who is called Christ. The title is hardly a proper name here. If it were not defined by the following relative clause (cf. i. 3) we should hardly see that the general truth is here concentrated upon One, the One whom the readers have acknowledged as alone entitled in their own days to bear the name.

So then the essential quality appears. He who is Christ is kin to God, Son of God; and as Son, is Lord over the house, not servant in it; himself a part of God's revelation, not one who points to a revelation from outside it. Thus Jesus' commanding work on earth is brought into line with the Sons of ch. i. On them the light fell that streamed from the divine glory. He who is that light has no name in this Epistle given Him in His eternal being but the name inherited from them, of Son. The Word, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, are terms to which the Church's lips were not yet accustomed. They will presently facilitate the defining of the problem which arises at this point; how can that super-celestial splendour be conceived as one with a man born on earth: or in another form; what is the ultimate difference between the Christship of Jesus, and the Christship of a king of Israel? But that problem, though it may be better and better defined, remains as yet insoluble, and this author has made no attempt to solve it. Nor is he anxious to define it. His aim is to make the divinity of his Lord understood in its working, as a

ground of devotion, a reason for loyalty, a foundation in slippery times. It is to him a truth into which men do see more and more clearly and steadily as they nourish wonder and reverence, and do their duty, and just then he believed that it lay upon his friends to make a momentous choice, on which their chance of such growth depended. He argued in order that they might act. Their action would carry out the unfinished argument—"His house we are, and you shall know it, if you will act upon the old watchwords: Boldness, gallant boast, hope."

(β) iii. 7-iv. 2. The exhortation with which the last division ended is fortified by the application of Ps. xcv., in which Israel was bidden to be faithful "to-day," taking warning from the unfaithfulness of their forefathers in the wilderness. The stress laid on the word "to-day" points to the crisis through which the readers of the Epistle are about to pass; there is a definite choice for them to make, an immediate act of will is required. To fail will be "unbelief," inconsistent with the faithfulness which characterizes the Christ. It will be apostasy from God as living God, as God manifested through the Son and in the near and vivid life of Jesus. The readers themselves must encourage one another every day during the brief period in which it still remains for them to make up their mind, for if they look only outwards the temptation is very strong. The sin involved is insidious; there is a "deceitfulness" in it, rooting honour in dishonour, which may harden them to act as a tender conscience would never allow.

The need of falling back on one another, on the traditions of their common life as followers of the Lord, is enforced by a phrase which corrects or enlarges the

“whose house are we” of *v.* 6, and reminds them of the Messianic quotation of *i.* 8 f. No mere servants of the household, but partners in the Christship; no heretical outsiders, but sharing the noblest life of ancient Israel will they be; nay, have they already become and will prove to be, if they will thus hold fast to the idea, so deeply founded in the past, of the Christ in Israel, that it may be carried on to perfection. “If only you will do this,” the writer repeats his ancient consecrated words with the emphasis of intense feeling, “while To-day is being still proclaimed!”

This all reads as though more would be understood by the recipients of the letter than is expressed in so many words. There would be sense in it if the letter were addressed to Christians at any crisis of approaching trial, even to Gentile Christians. But addressed to Jewish Christians when their fellow countrymen were appealing to them by all that patriots hold sacred to render whole-hearted allegiance to the old faith, and join the orthodox enthusiasts in the defence of country and Temple, it would bear a specially appropriate force. So would the verses that follow, in which the author reminds them how their forefathers forfeited the promised rest through lack of the long sight of faith. They thought themselves bold in protesting, proving doubtful authority, rebelling, but their wilfulness was really a timid betrayal of a hope that was a trust, a thing for brave men to hold fast—the very mistake these readers are in peril of making. Mistake however is an inadequate word. Such mistakes appear in the sacred history as sin. They were opposition to God, and produced a perversion of the relations between God and His people of which visible disaster

was a kind of sacrament. These perverted relations are described by three terms borrowed from the Psalm, in which with an increasing boldness the analogy of human passions suggests the movement of the divine mind. Yet this analogy is applied with care. The oath of God is not to be considered an oath of exclusion, but a ratifying of the necessary consequence of man's failure of will (cf. vi. 4-8, x. 26 f.). The promise remains unchanged. If it is again missed, it will be because men have again fallen short. The doctrine of reciprocal action between God and man is briefly set forth. The difficulties of the doctrine are not explained; how for instance the failure of those ancient Israelites with its terrible consequence could have been allowed to happen by God if He were of infinite love and power. Here as throughout the Epistle the aim is practical and immediate. God is contemplated as He manifests himself, and He does not manifest himself in His infinite quality. In ancient history God has appeared to limit himself; there has always been room for the interplay of man's will with His. So it is now, says the author; the same good word of promise abides; the same need of choice in appropriating it. He ends however with a note of confidence (cf. vi. 9). "They," he says, "dropped out of the line; they failed to achieve that venture of faith which would have made them one with those who have now listened and obeyed. For there are such; we who have made our venture are now entering into rest." This "we" he leaves undefined. He knows it includes himself (cf. xiii. 21); he hopes it includes, as he is persuaded it shall include, those to whom he writes.

(γ) iv. 4-11. Verse 3 is transitional. It ends the

last argumentative series, but it introduces a deeper meditation on the Psalmist's phrases. For now the disasters of the wilderness are treated, after the author's manner, as having a sacramental significance; the death of a generation of men was what could be seen, the alienation from God was the reality lying behind the visible. But a deeper sacrament than that was involved. The rest of the land of promise was the visible symbol of the eternal rest entered by God when the work of creation was finished, and destined by Him for His people in all ages. "If they shall enter!" implied that the rest was there. "To-day," in the Psalm of a later age, "To-day, if they shall enter!" implied that the rest remained. Whatever may have been the result of the Psalmist's appeal, the author and his friends know well that the appeal has force for them. The word "rest" reaches their heart in the turbulent times to which they have been born. A rest in the eternal, invisible sphere, a rest which subsists in the midst of danger, a rest, not like the military success of Joshua, but one with the seventh-day rest of the Creator, still remains open to the people of God. Into such a rest the readers are actually entering if they make their one bold venture. Into such a rest the writer (as he shews in xiii. 21) has himself already entered. And when we consider the opening words of this chapter, and the chapter that led up to it, and the subject of the whole Epistle, we feel that here too light is flashed upon the mystery of the earthly life and the death of Jesus; "For he that is entered," . . . of *v.* 10 prepares for, "who hath passed through the heavens," of *v.* 14.

(δ) *iv.* 12, 13. The exhortation to diligence and

zeal, with which the last paragraph closed, makes the passage to the next easier, "let us be zealous, for the word of God is so keen." But this paragraph has a further import. It explains the principle upon which the author interprets these passages from the sacred books. It might be objected that he had been forcing more from Psalms and other writings than, treated simply, they would yield. The answer is that the word of God wherever heard—in a written book, a hero's life, or in conscience—lives and operates, reaching to the very centre of a man's being, in whatever times or circumstances he may happen to live. So long as it is treated conscientiously and practically, its meaning can never be exhausted. "For us," the author says, "the word is intimately bound up with God and is ever coming freshly from His presence" (13 Greek). He adopts expressions that Philo applies to the all but personal Being he names "the Word" in his treatises. From this it would seem that the reference here is not to the written word, the Old Testament. Yet if not, the point of the verses, standing where they do, would be lost. The fact is the term is used here in a wide sense (which covers both *v.* 12 and *v.* 13), and the author would have us understand that such passages as he has quoted, are not merely fixed and written sayings. The words of a book are signs of a life behind them; the words of the Old Testament are manifestations of the mind of the living God; they are not the premisses of an argument, but conversation still going on. Philo's idea is neither excluded nor adopted, though his terms are found convenient. It is gathered up into a larger idea which is here applied in a particular direction. Yet all this

is rather suggested than sharply expressed. What is insisted upon is that the living power behind the written or spoken word is awful. The solemn earnestness of these verses assures us that the author will never be merely fanciful in his interpretations.

(ε) iv. 14-16. The picture in ch. i. of the Sons of God illumined by that Effulgence of the Godhead who inherited their name of Son; and in ch. ii. of Jesus glorified in suffering; finally the thoughts and appeals of chs. iii. and iv., form converging lines of argument. Here at last they are brought together. The inference by which the junction is effected is not quite logically drawn. It is rather justified by two phrases. The first is, "great Highpriest, who hath passed through the heavens, Son of God," the force of which dwells in its appropriateness, as often happens in poet's logic. We meditate on all that has been said, and our vague desire to express the result is satisfied by the completeness and sincerity of these few words. But secondly, since colder reason might complain that after all it has been cheated into false assent, "let us hold fast our confession" is added. That is the confession or profession of the Christian family; the "creed," less formal perhaps than ours, but even intenser as being a battle-cry in face of persecution. It is an appeal to that sense of duty which runs through the Epistle and which, though painful when resisted or shirked, will (so the author hopes for his friends) be in the end the instrument of peace—"for we which have hearkened, believed, obeyed (οἱ πιστεύσαντες), do enter into that rest." Then having just touched that stern chord again, he invites his readers to use even now the faith which as yet perhaps is only half

gained. So human, so sympathetic is this divine Highpriest, that even His wavering followers may draw near with Him to the heavenly presence of which His graciousness is the symbol; and so may gain the help without which they can advance no farther through their impending test.

PART II.—CHAPTER V.—X. 18

HIGH PRIESTHOOD

IN the four opening chapters the idea of our Lord as a Highpriest has been introduced. "Would you understand what Jesus your Lord really is," the author says in effect, "consider Him as a Highpriest, and I think I can make you understand. And it is not unreasonable so to consider Him. Compare what you know of His life on earth and the deep feeling it rouses in you, with those deep thoughts about God's eternal operations which the national history and sacred books of Israel suggest, and you will see how this idea of the true Highpriest promises to bring all into harmony."

Having thus introduced this analogy, he now proceeds to work it out in v. to x. 18, shewing in detail what such Highpriesthood is and what it effects, viz. real access to the presence of God. This is naturally followed in x. 19-39 by exhortation to use this right of access and to follow the Lord into the divine presence, which

is not a place far away, but that eternity in the midst of temporal things which the Highpriestly work of Jesus Christ has made it possible for men to know, and which the readers of this Epistle will know if they do the particular duty that now lies before them.

The argument will be more easily followed if it is first presented in the briefest possible form. The familiar priesthood of the Tabernacle shews what the aim of priesthood is; to offer sacrifice by means of which their sin being cleansed away, the people of God may enter His presence. This priesthood has never succeeded in its aim; the whole thing, priest sacrifice and entrance, has been but a kind of representation, make-believe, or shadow. But there has been a real priesthood in the world from early times which the Psalmist calls highpriesthood after the order of Melchizedek. This is the Highpriesthood of the Christ in history, and has effected something; this is a real symbol of eternal truth. After this order of highpriesthood our Lord Jesus Christ offered himself as a visible sacrifice on Calvary, which was a real symbol of an operation in the eternal sphere. And this operation is effectual for men. Analogy again shews that priesthood and sacrifice have to do with the Covenant between God and His People; they are meant to reach out to men in their effects. Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant shews that God has implanted in man's heart an expectation of such effects being really produced; a Psalmist has already testified how to him they have actually been produced, because he received the influence of God by his own participation in God's will. There is the point of union. Our Lord Jesus

Christ offered His sacrifice by a real act of His will, an act of union with God's will. By a like act of their will, an act of union with His will, the readers may find (what of course no logic will ever prove) that His sacrifice has been effectual for them.

Or more tersely still: "You know the Levitical priesthood, its aim and its failure. But there is another priesthood in the world connected with another covenant, and treated in Scripture as a true symbol of an eternal fact. Scripture witnesses to the hope of its success, indeed to its actual success where the human will went with it. This is the Highpriesthood of our Lord, and in our union with His will it reaches full effect."

V. 1-10. The characteristics of highpriesthood in general are described, are shewn to belong to the priesthood of the Christ, and hence to Him who has inherited that title. These characteristics are (1) manhood and the sympathy that goes with it; (2) the duty of offering; (3) appointment by the voice of God.

The paragraph begins quite generally. If "even as was Aaron" be genuine,¹ it does not limit these verses to the Aaronic priesthood, but merely asserts that they may be applied to that as they may to any other highpriesthood that may anywhere be seen. Indeed it is remarkable how small a part of this central division of the Epistle, which deals entirely with priesthood, is concerned with the Aaronic order. That order however must be considered, and considered in a special way, for that is the order with which the readers were actually familiar,

¹ The words are omitted in the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus, which gives an early and apparently a very pure text resembling B.

and it is therefore the starting-point of all their thought on the subject. And these opening verses, for all that they are the statement of a general truth, seem to contain a particular significance. It is not the scheme of priesthood in a book, but good, generous, simple-minded priests whom he and his readers have known, that these words of the author call to mind. Here, as so often in the course of the argument, a hearty human interest breaks in, and saves it from being merely artificial.

(1) *The characteristic of manhood.* A highpriest is "taken from among men," one "who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring," and he offers "as for the people, so also for himself." This was all true of our Lord "in the days of his flesh," which were the days from which all knowledge of Him started; whatever else might be learned about Him, He was evidently taken from among men to be Highpriest. His weakness was evidently as real as any human weakness could be—the scene of tears and cries in Gethsemane proved that notably. At the end of the last chapter His sinlessness has been so strongly asserted that there could be no fear of the readers supposing the correspondence to be carried so far as a common fall. There is however no real need for this caution. In vii. 27 the Aaronic highpriests are said to offer for their own sins. Here where the whole passage is general, the application of the offering is also general; the highpriest offers with respect to sins, with respect to himself as well as with respect to the people. The sins of the people do touch him of course; so in the crying and tears of Gethsemane the sins of men did touch our Lord; but neither He nor the highpriest described in 1-4, are thought of as themselves sin-stained

though they are sin-burdened. Only emphasis is laid upon the reality of our Lord's connexion with the sins of men. Whatever burden and hindrance the sins of his people are to the best kind of man, the highpriestly man, at least so much the sins of men burdened and hindered our Lord in the days of His flesh. "Without sin" in iv. 15 is not used in quite the same way as in ix. 28, and is quite different from "separated from sinners" in vii. 26. The two later passages do not refer directly to the days of the flesh.

(2) *The duty of offering.* This is the "end," or "perfection" of the priesthood, "that he may offer." A highpriest is appointed to make offerings; it is a generous office to which giving not receiving is natural. And this offering is a bringing near to God on whose side of man he stands (τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν).¹ The word προσφέρειν ("offer to"), far more common in the Epistle than ἀναφέρειν ("offer up"), strikes the keynote of the whole argument from the first; the highpriest's business is to bring near to God, and the purpose of this letter is that certain persons may trust their Highpriest to bring them near. The word is repeated in 7; the supplications and cries of our Lord were an offering, and issued in the benefit of others.

(3) *Appointment by the voice of God.* To look steadily at the humility of things is not to empty them of greatness; the greatness appears in the humility. This truth, already acknowledged in ii., is firmly grasped by the author. So here the growth of highpriesthood

¹ Cf. Ex. iv. 16. The Lord promises Moses that Aaron shall be His spokesman; σὺ δὲ αὐτῷ ἔσῃ τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, "and thou shalt be to him on the Godward side," inspiring the spirit of the message which he must express in words.

out of human needs and relationships is acknowledged as a general and evident fact. But when that fact has been recognized the deeper source of highpriesthood can be understood. Not every man, not every sympathetic, generous man, is made a highpriest. There are rules and conditions of appointment, and rightly viewed these are seen to spring from the divine call as their ultimate source. That which viewed from one side, is an evolution from human society, viewed from the other side, is from God. So it was with Aaron and the Levitical priesthood. Various events are recorded in the Old Testament as the immediate occasions of the separation of the tribe or family for the service of the sanctuary, but there is also the record of the call of God which lay behind all these occasions. So was it also with the Christ. "The christ," ὁ χριστός, in 5, as elsewhere in the Epistle when the word is used with the article, points to the visible Christ of the Old Testament, "the LORD'S Anointed," that is, to speak generally, the reigning King. That these kings did offer sacrifice and perform priestly duties, just as the ancient king-priest Melchizedek had done, is a fact often recorded in Israel's history. If this had merely rested on national convenience, or human fashion, the right would be hard to justify, for in a large part of the Old Testament the priestly office is distinctly separated from the king. But behind the variations of law and practice lay the sanction of God's call. God who hailed His Anointed as His Son, appointed Him also to be Priest, not according to the order of Aaron from which as a matter of fact He had been excluded, but according to that primæval and really symbolical order, the order of Melchizedek. God's appointment of

the Christ to this order, plainly recorded in the Psalm, justifies our author in his whole argument.

But "the Christ" in 5, is the antecedent to "who" in 7, and this "who" introduces three verses which clearly refer to our Lord and not to the Christs of the Old Testament. This warns us against defining the meaning of "the Christ" too sharply. The title had been given to our Lord when this Epistle was written. It had already become, without the article, His surname. It was now possible to use the title "the Christ" in either of the two senses; the Lord's Anointed of the Old Testament, or the Anointed One *par excellence*, Jesus. The context might determine which use was intended in any given sentence; or the speaker's or hearers' habits of thought might determine it. Hence a risk of ambiguity, and on the other hand an enriching of many quotations and modern utterances with mysterious depth. So here the thought of Jesus lies behind the reference to the Old Testament in 5 f. and emerging fills the field in 7-10. The emergence is helped by the addition of "in the days of his flesh" in which perhaps the visible presence of Jesus is contrasted with the sacramental presence of the Son through the Christs of old, as well as with the spiritual presence of Jesus Christ the exalted Saviour. However that may be, the author claims as evidence of God's appointment of Jesus to highpriestly rank, the fulfilment in Gethsemane of the other conditions of highpriesthood, the sharing in human weakness, the sympathy, the offering. As evidence; for this passion and action issued in that final and perfect determination to die that was described as crowning and perfecting in ii., and is here also styled perfecting,—*τελειωθεῖς*, "having

been made perfect." Perhaps this word may be taken as marking the hour of His "becoming" Highpriest, but the addition "named of God," introducing the quotation again from the Psalm, warns us against too prosaic an enquiry into dates and places. What is visible in its "becoming" answers in this Epistle to a divine and invisible act in the eternal sphere, and even apart from such considerations, it is plain that He who was then "perfected" had already through the Psalmist been "hailed as Highpriest." These anticipatory phrases in the Old Testament are the rudder of our author's Old Testament exegesis. They had their primary, contemporary meaning and he does not ignore it. Philo an allegorist might do so; he a sacramentalist would stultify his whole system of thought if he did. But what impresses him and what he tries to impress upon his readers is the aptness of these phrases to the work of their Lord. Hence he sometimes, as here, seems to think of something which was accomplished in the life of Jesus, as already done by God in Old Testament times—already done rather than predicted. So in ii. 10 the aorist participle ἀγαγόντα, properly "having brought," should be explained as referring to the Psalm just quoted; God had already brought many sons to glory through the declaration of the ancient Psalmist.

V. 11.—VI. 20. The argument about "the order of Melchizedek" seems to some modern readers little else than an elaborate piece of trifling, which they tolerate only because they realize that in this strange form an important truth is somehow expressed. The difference between our minds and the original readers' may perhaps be exaggerated. At any rate the author seems to fear

something of the same kind, and before he launches fairly upon his argument he makes a strong remonstrance against treating the subject lightly. He begins this remonstrance indeed almost playfully, with a literary reminiscence of S. Paul, whose language (addressed to *his* brothers, 1 Cor. iii. 1 f.), about food for babes, he applies to these learned babes, his own intimate friends. But the half-playful allusion to "milk" and "alphabet," is his courteous, affectionate way of introducing a warning terribly in earnest.

The whole passage falls into three divisions, the first of which is again divided into three parts:—

A. v. 11–vi. 8. (i.) Remonstrance, v. 11–14.

(ii.) Appeal, vi. 1–3.

(iii.) Warning with illustration, vi. 4–8.

B. vi. 9–12. Encouragement introducing thought of promise.

C. vi. 13–20. Explanation of promise ending with illustration that brings the argument back to Melchizedek.

A. (i.) v. 11–14. The chief point to be noticed in this remonstrance is its practical character. It was difficult to express the idea of highpriesthood after the order of Melchizedek to men who were not interested in eternity and its symbols, as we should say, in theology. The readers of the Epistle appear to be losing that interest, perhaps under stress of the practical anxieties of the impending crisis. But the author points out that this interest is itself the most practical matter. "The word of righteousness," and "to discern good and evil," are not the phrases he might have been expected to use ;

they might be paraphrased by "ethics" and "honour." That is the strong food of full-grown men, of which babes engaged upon the alphabet have no experience. Dropping theology, these men had lost more. They no longer held firm the simple and essential truths of religion. But if they really needed to go back to spiritual infancy and study these again, how could they make the difficult decision which the pressure of those times forced upon them, and for which a disciplined sense of right and wrong was demanded?

Did they really need it? The next paragraph will shew that the author thought not. The repetition "ye have need," "such as have need," sounds as though he might be quoting their own words, giving them a reproachful turn. With some such phrase they had perhaps been excusing their failure to take the bold step he demands. If that step really was breaking with their Jewish friends and refusing to join in the national rebellion; and if that failure was accompanied by the assertion that they saw nothing in the Christian faith which need be added to the old and simpler creed of the Jew; and if they were inclined to hold that honour made the course they contemplated needful; then this paragraph gains a sharply distinct meaning. "You say you cannot distinguish these niceties of creeds, and might be well content to learn the old faith better and act up to it more sincerely; you say you must needs join your nation. I will shew you what this need implies. You must needs learn over again the Jewish elements of your faith in order to decide whether or no this new faith contains anything better than the old. You need babe's milk just when a choice is offered you that

demands the clear judgement of a mature and disciplined conscience. You speak of obligation and honour, but this return to childhood in religion prevents your judging about so delicate a matter with the sure instinctive certainty of manhood."

A. (ii.) vi. 1-3. The last paragraph shewed that the readers had so far lost hold of religious truth, that it seemed to them needful to go back to the beginning and learn the very alphabet again. Whatever that may mean, the author appeals to them to do no such thing. The threatening signs of the times themselves might give them confidence. Changes were in progress which would affect life and thought. To a weak faith this might seem to imply that what they had accepted for truth was doomed. A stronger faith would reason otherwise. The movement was from God; it must be towards more perfect truth, whatever of seeming value had to be given up. In that strongly running tide let them be borne on together; its onward moving strength would counterbalance their weakness. *Φερώμεθα*, "let us be borne onwards to perfection," carries back the mind to *φέρων τὰ πάντα* in i. 3. Once again the idea occurs of finding the highest in the lowest; the troubles of the times reveal the presence of the eternal Son.

Here again the hope of finding a new beginning of religion in Judaism seems to be deprecated. In the last paragraph, "the rudiments of the beginning of God's oracles," would most naturally mean the simplest and most obvious instruction that could be drawn from the Old Testament. Here "the argument of the beginning, or first doctrine of the Christ," would be that doctrine of the Christ in the Old Testament which even to a Jew

meant much, though a Christian at once learnt to fill it with a new significance. The doctrine of washings, of imposition of hands, of resurrection and of eternal judgement, could all be found in those books of the Old Testament in Greek which the author habitually used. Repentance from dead works and faith towards God is indeed not what S. Paul would go to Judaism to find, but much as he has learned from S. Paul this author does not see everything with his eyes. And S. Paul himself would have acknowledged that the words are a fair summary of the teaching of the Prophets, and that the baptisms or washings (cf. the same plural word in ix. 10), laying on of hands, resurrection, and judgement, in *v.* 2, represent the system of orthodox Judaism. But perhaps rather more than that is implied in *v.* 1, and its allusion is not merely to literature. As in *v.* 1-3 he thought of good priests whom he had known, so here the author recalls good repentances that he has known (whatever S. Paul's experience might be) under the Jewish Law. So far he might go with his readers; why he cannot go further he will shew presently.

A. (iii). *vi.* 4-8. The hope of finding a fresh starting-point in the simplicity of the old faith from which the readers had emerged into Christianity, was shewn to be an unpractical dream for men who were confronted with such a moral choice as lay before them (*v.* 11-14). They were urged to give it up and press forward to the fuller truth that the movement of events was bringing in (*vi.* 1, 2). And in *vi.* 3 the author with a very solemn restraint of language claims that they should thus press forward with him. For doing so he adds now another reason, The dream is not only

unpractical; it is a dream of something which in the very nature of things is impossible. For this backward step would not be (as they fondly imagined) a mere renunciation of unnecessary subtleties of thought and disputes about abstractions. It would be a despicable act of violence and scorn against the eternal Son of God. To start men anew on a life of innocence while that very start was interlinked with and dependent upon an act of guilt, would be a plan contradictory of itself, and in the nature of things impossible. That the act would be of such a nature was certain to all who considered in detail and as a whole what the entrance upon the Christian faith was, how deeply it reached into eternal things. To give up what was thus entered upon would be no indifferent matter; it would be to fall away from the sphere of eternity, to perpetrate a deed as far-reaching in its sacramental significance as the crucifixion had been, or to repeat the crucifixion in their own lives as infliction, not reception. S. Paul had taught that Christ was born in the birth of His faithful, and they crucified in their conversion. Our author remembering that doctrine (which, of course, was the Church's not S. Paul's alone), tells his friends that their desertion of their post will be a caricature—a preposterous perversion of it. The faithful are crucified with Christ. The cowards crucify Him to save themselves. There is no need to give the unusual sense of *crucify again* to ἀνασταυροῦν, though the versions do, and the assonance with ἀνακαίνιζεν suggests it. The main idea is the horrible perversion of the Christian doctrine of the universal character of the *one* crucifixion.

Such dull childish indecision, such ineffectual re-

petition of half-hearted efforts, is illustrated by a comparison—drawn partly from actual observation of nature, partly from the language of the Old Testament—with land that produces naught but weeds and must at last be set on fire. And in contrast is set that land which, receiving rain, and also being laboured at by its owners, takes its share in a blessing from God and so progresses in fertility even though some of its natural advantages be checked. The land is talked of as though it were endowed with life and will. It represents the general law that cheerful effort receives the addition of a further inexplicable impulse, while sullen rebellion comes to ruin even more quickly and thoroughly than mere external circumstances would warrant; the laws of nature as of history are instinct with the blessing and the curse of God.

B. vi. 9–12. The author has faced, and forced his friends to face, a fearful possibility. It has not however as yet been realized; so far they are still true to their profession, and the right choice still lies before them within reach. And he insists on believing that they will make that choice. Their own character and God's memory rest upon a past when not only their several actions, but their whole consistent course of action and the motive that underlay that course gave good hope for the future. This memory confirms that character. The nobler kind of honour is their own, so is their kinship with God's healthful purpose of salvation. And that motive is so important. He lays stress on it by repetition; "beloved," "work of love," "children of my love and of God's love you have learnt the secret of love, the generous, priestly, giving habit, which binds together all those receivings, all those

privileges that by themselves might be insufficient to assure constancy" — for in vi. 4–6 there was no mention of imparting anything. How this love had been shewn in time past is evident if the phrase "unto the saints" be compared with x. 32–34 and xiii. 1–3. They had been good friends to the brothers who shared their possession and consecration in some past time of need. The present participle *διακονοῦντες* may by its emphatic position escape the usual limitations of participial construction and imply that they are still practising like kindness, however their theological convictions may be wavering. But the author tells them more is needed. That love was no mere temporal kindness. It was "unto God's name"; it reached into the eternal sphere. And it must now shew that it is directed to a deeper relationship in which it takes on a new aspect and name — "diligence," "zeal."¹ This zeal will work for the completion of the hope unto the end. The articles are expressive. This hope, this end, belong to the faith of the "beloved" and the "saints." They centre in their Lord, and zeal means loyalty to Him as well as kindness to the brethren. This zeal again is no new thing, but is the mark of the true keen spirits of the older age, the trusting, long enduring heirs of the unchanging promises, which were not then but are now near to be grasped.

C. vi. 13–20. This paragraph brings the readers back to the Melchizedek priesthood and the main argument. It takes up the words *hope, long-suffering,*

¹ σπουδή (σπεύδω), cf. 2 Pet. iii. 12, προσδοκῶντας καὶ σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας. Is there a thought of that *παρουσία* which the Church has waited for and which our author believes may be in an unexpected sense near? Whether our Lord really comes in the expected *πειρασμῶς* partly depends on the loyal anticipations of His faithful.

promise; confirms, defines and concentrates their meaning; shews that they stand for realities in the past, and are now realities within reach. The promises made to Abraham of seed, dominion, and wide-spread blessing extending to all mankind, were gathered into one comprehensive, pregnant promise at the definite time when he shewed his long-suffering by the supreme act of trust in sacrificing Isaac—for we shall see in ch. xi. that the author considers that sacrifice to have been effectually offered. And at that time God confirmed His promise by an oath, acting thus as a mediator between Himself and His servant.¹ Thus a double assurance was handed on to Abraham's children, Isaac and Jacob fellow-heirs with their progenitor of the promise (xi. 9); promise and oath combining with the divine character to make the truth irrefragable. Yet they, like Abraham, but obtained, they did not carry home (*ἐκομίσαντο*, xi. 39) the promise. That remained for the rising generation of the new world. And now to that generation the great opportunity is offered. They are those who find in the troubles and changes of their time a means of larger hope. Out of the storm they have run to port that they may lay hold on the hope which is now already part of actual everyday life, just as much as their contemporary trial is. A picture follows which explains what that hope is, namely the hope of entering into the very presence of God. They are like the crew of a ship which has reached the haven. They have let down the anchor

¹ Cf. Job xvi. 21, xvii. 3. "There is no stranger thought in the book than that God may be surety to Himself for Job. It is as though God suffers the knowledge of His future attitude to mitigate the full sweep of His anger. He is to take sides against Himself, to secure Himself against vain regrets" (A. S. Peake in the *Century Bible*).

into the deep. It already holds the land. The captain has gone ashore—on their behalf, as the captains of ships in which the author and his friends may have sailed would do, to transact the necessary preliminaries for the unloading of the ship and the landing of those who sail in it. But the picture thus vividly sketched fades and passes into more serious lines as it is completed. The mysterious deep becomes the veil of the tabernacle; the day on which the voyage ends is the ancient Day of Atonement; and yet again the name—the bare human name—Jesus, carries recollection forward from the ancient book of Israel's ritual to the execution on Calvary, a tragedy still fresh in the minds of those who have fled for refuge. And then the double recollection becomes one harmonized whole. The sacramental principle raises the visible to the eternal, and the moment of death is recognized as the moment of priestly entrance into the true sanctuary, and the prophecy of the Psalmist is fulfilled concerning the Highpriest, eternal, after the order of Melchizedek.

With the picture suggested by these last two verses, two other pictures should be compared, the arena in xii. 1, 2, and the sacrifice in xiii. 10-13. These three pictures mark stages in the course of the Epistle. Here the argument is brought to the point where the elaborate analogy of the Priesthood begins, and this first illustration brings out the simplest truth of the divine priesthood, *i.e.* that the Lord Jesus has entered as forerunner into the presence of God. He is thought of as preparing for His people, but as hidden, beyond their sight. In ch. xii. the appeal to faith has been emphasized by the roll of honour in ch. xi. and the followers of the fore-

runner are exhorted to take up their task and press after Him. Here Jesus is represented as at a distance still, but within sight. The runners are to run His race, endure His contest, but their encouragement is in keeping their eyes fixed on Him who has run and endured before them, and is now to be beheld throned at the goal. In ch. xiii. the end of argument and exhortation is already reached. The picture or sacrament here passes imperceptibly into the reality it symbolizes. Jesus is here not merely within sight, but is to be reached, touched, partaken in. It is the picture of a sacrifice, or rather of the off-scouring of a sacrifice. The crucifixion to outward sight was like the burning of the offal outside the sacred precincts. There, outside the camp, by entering upon a like humiliation in the same spirit of heroic love and courage, author and readers will find themselves *πρὸς αὐτόν*—in nearest possible relationship with their Lord, and *δι' αὐτοῦ*—able to make offering themselves in union with His sacrifice to God.

VII. The argument in this chapter shews something of the Philonic manner. But while Philo, delighting in the exercise of word play, lets his pen run away with him, the author of the Epistle is remarkably terse. Like Philo he has a practical end in view, but he hastens to reach it. That end is to shew the correspondence of the exalted Christ to the needs of men (26), and to prepare for working out this correspondence in terms of the Covenant (22).

There are four main divisions, the third of which may be subdivided :

A. 1-3. Melchizedek, a mystery to which the key is to be sought. The passage of Genesis by

its eloquent silence, the continuity suggested by the reference in the Psalm, present him as a type or sacrament of a Priest who is divine and eternal.

- B.* 4-10. The subjection of Levi to this Priest is argued by verbal subtlety. The formal priesthood appears a laity in relation to this antique figure of a living principle.
- C.* 11-25. This subjection is shewn to be real by the actual imperfection of the Levitical service.
- (*a*) 11-14. The appeal of the Psalmist presupposes need of change and plainly points to Jesus Christ.
- (*β*) 15-19. Reflexion upon that appeal and the depth of the hope it rouses are an argument still stronger than any obvious coincidence that amendment has come and that Jesus Christ is the author of it.
- (*γ*) 20-22. The immutable purpose signified by God's oath (which rests upon an emphatic phrase in the Psalmist) introduces
- (*δ*) 23-25. the bold and definite application of the Psalmist's promise of his Highpriest's abiding life to the Lord whose abiding life is proved by the experience of the faithful. To His intercession the author appeals as to a power that has been tested.
- D.* 26-28. All this is concentrated upon the person and position of the exalted Christ, which the author declares to be in harmony with the needs and expectations of His people.

Three ideas stand out as we contemplate the whole passage :

- (i.) The ancient words of the Old Testament are full of meaning which unfolds in length of time. Either the writers themselves are to be credited with deep mystical thought, or the Holy Spirit still speaks through them more than they themselves perceived ; they were "hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration."
- (ii.) The words reveal an indissoluble life running through the changing course of history and gradually emerging into clearness.
- (iii.) The words approach interpretation and the stream of life rises into sight in answer to a yearning in men for moral perfection which will not be denied.

A. 1-3. Ps. cx. has already been quoted more than once, and Melchizedek's name and office are already therefore in the readers' mind. In the last verse of the last chapter the entrance of Jesus within the veil has been described as taking place on His becoming High-priest after the order of Melchizedek. The introductory "for" here shews that this statement is about to be justified, and after the argument has run its course through the chapter, the author re-affirms his statement (26-28), considering that he has justified it.

First he sets out, keeping as far as possible to the very words of the Septuagint, what is told of Melchizedek in Gen. xiv. 17-20. He does not repeat the words of Melchizedek's blessing, nor does he notice the bread and wine which the kingly priest brought forth. But he does lay stress on the meaning of His name—King of

righteousness, and of His title—King of Salem or peace. This name and this title are indeed striking in Genesis, coming abruptly as they do in the midst of the narrative of Abraham's dealings on the same occasion with the bearer of so ominous a title as King of Sodom. He also notices Abraham's tribute of a tithe, upon which he intends to found argument in the next section. More surprising is his description of Melchizedek as "without father, mother, genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." All this is drawn not from any statement in Genesis but from the absence of statement to the contrary. Yet when we turn to Gen. xiv. we do not find the inference unreasonable. The episode is introduced so suddenly; its deep, holy tone contrasts so strongly with the warfare that surrounds it—Salem peace in the midst of strife, King of righteousness in the midst of rapine, God most high acknowledged by this King who reigns among heathen neighbours; who is he? we ask, and the record gives no answer. Then the Psalmist long afterwards takes up the same name which from that dim pre-historic day till his own has never been named in the written history again; gives continuance (*εἰς τὸ διηνεκές*) to his memory; and speaks of a royal priesthood, such as the LORD had assigned to Israel (Ex. xix.), being after his order and so eternal. All this gives food for thought and suggests analogies and applications to one who is accustomed to trace the "branching thoughts" of holy writ. The participles *ἐρμηνευόμενος* and *ἀφωμολογούμενος* warn us in what sense the daring epithets are to be taken. This is a matter of interpretation and not of prosaic fact. Here is a sketch, a note which none but the divine author could explain till the completed picture

was seen. But, says our author in *v.* 26, that picture has now been seen (cf. *ii.* 9), and all who will may fill up the outline of these antique characters. Moreover *ἀγενεαλόγητος* directs the reader how to take *ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ κ.τ.λ.* A man without a pedigree is not a man of superhuman origin, but one whose ancestry is not declared; so is it with the father, mother, beginning and end of Melchizedek as with his pedigree. For a reason—and here the reason is a far-reaching one—these things have not been declared in Scripture about him.¹

He stands likened to, or as a type of, the Son of God. Unbiased readers of the Epistle will probably agree with the early commentators that the author does think of the “Son” of God almost as S. John thinks of the “Word” of God. Perhaps his mind being less philosophical dwells less upon the eternal being than upon that presence of the Son with and in Israel all through recorded time. However that may be, he would consider the type to represent life before the Incarnation as well as after it. That is the first suggestion of *ἀφωμοιωμένος*. There is perhaps a second, not contradicting but supplementing that first one. The lowly estate of Jesus in whom the divine Sonship was perfectly manifested, was righteous, peaceful, worthy of the tithe of homage from the seed of Abraham, yet how obscure. His royal descent might be “openly evident” (*πρόδηλον*) to those who owned Him Lord; to Roman governors and the Jewish aristocracy He was *ἀπάτωρ κ.τ.λ.* And in *μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν κ.τ.λ.* it would be hardly fanciful to

¹ Cf. [Longinus] *περὶ ὕψους*, ix. “Ὅθεν καὶ φωνῆς δίχα θαυμάζεται ποτε ψιλὴ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν ἢ ἔννοια δι’ αὐτὸ τὸ μεγαλόφρον, ὡς ἢ τοῦ Αἰάντος ἐν Νεκυία σιωπῇ μέγα καὶ πάντος ὑψηλότερον λόγου.

find a reminiscence of Is. liii.: ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἤρθη· τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγῆσεται; ὅτι αἴρεται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ . . . ἐὰν δώτε περὶ ἁμαρτίας, ἡ ψυχὴ ἡμῶν ὄψεται σπέρμα μακρόβιον . . . διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλούς, καὶ τῶν ἰσχυρῶν μεριεῖ σκύλα.

B. 4-10. The first words of the section again direct attention to the author's method of argument. We are to look at, take a comprehensive view of what stands visibly pictured in the ancient narrative: cf. ii. 8, 9, ὀρῶμεν, βλέπομεν, and contrast iii. 1, κατανοήσατε. Then this point will stand out. Melchizedek, a stranger, took tithe from Abraham the father of the chosen race. Taking tithe indeed is no extraordinary privilege. The priests of the tribe of Levi also do so; but how differently. They do this according to an ordinance which is divine indeed yet affects only the nation to which the sons of Levi themselves belong; it is according to the Law, a private matter within the family of God. In spite of the high ancestry of Israelites they are still Levites' brethren and mutual obligations are natural between them. But here is something more than kindred or custom explains. A stranger unconnected by tie of blood stands for all time in the nation's sacred book as the receiver of tithe from the nation's revered founder, and as one who exercised the priest's prerogative of blessing towards this same founder who, as the holder of the divine promises to the nation, should be the only channel of such prerogative.

The argument in this section seems to us to rest on verbal subtlety. Yet if we could put ourselves into the position of a Jew of that period and think with his mind the subtlety would be almost lost in the clearness of the national appeal. This is indeed just one of those passages

which make strongly against the readers of the epistle being other than "Hebrews." It presupposes a habit of thought and feeling, a set of sympathies, which spring from a long ancestry of Jewish churchmen. To the Gentile all might seem an academic exercise in book learning. The Hebrew reader understood the Hebrew writer's heart.

The section ends by summing up the greatness implied by both tithe and blessing, and by emphasizing the contrast between the mortal transitory honour of Levi and the Levitical priests with this priest, who, as the Psalm witnesses, *lives*. The Melchizedek of history and the Abraham of history fade imperceptibly, as the sentences succeed one another, into their successors—nation, Levites, the order of Melchizedek, and the Psalmist's royal priest who complete that order. Then the thought of this long succession and developement is made vivid by the brief final recalling of the day on which for an hour or two these ancestors, on whom so much depended, met.

C. 11-25. This introduction made, the author comes seriously to the real point, namely the need of reform in the priesthood which the facts of life compel the true Hebrew to acknowledge; and the supreme perfection of the reform which has actually appeared in Jesus Christ. The progress of the argument through this section may be measured by putting its opening and concluding phrases in juxtaposition. *Εἰ μὲν οὖν τελείωσις διὰ τῆς Λευιτικῆς ἱερωσύνης*—a cold technical term for perfection, an ordinance for agent, a nation for object, and all hypothetical; *Ὅθεν καὶ σώζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ*,

πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν—an established conclusion, terms of power and affection emphatically placed to express the work accomplished, a Person bringing persons to God, completion of power, perfection of life.

(a) 11-14. The Levitical priesthood and the Law are bound up together. They have been for centuries and still are the apparent basis of Israel's life. A change is a serious matter, nothing could justify the thought of it but the failure of this priestly Law to do what God means to have done. But that is the perfection of His people. Perfection is a technical term of priestly ritual; the essential meaning of the ritual term is the bringing of man to God; it is a natural term to use if the real end of Law is to be described, which is to make men innocent. Does the Levitical ordinance accomplish such perfection? The author first appeals to his Psalmist. If it had done so in his day he would not have recalled Melchizedek and proclaimed another kind of priest after his order. Another kind, for such words imply no participation in Levitical kin or service. So it was with Melchizedek, so with the King whom the Psalmist saw upon the throne in his own day and for whom perhaps he composed his psalm. So the principle stands throughout the series he contemplated, and now it is clear for all to see if, like the author and his friends, they acknowledge Jesus as the Lord to whom the LORD God speaks in the opening verse of the Psalm. Those who call Him "our Lord" know that He is of the royal tribe of Judah.

The repeated "for" is puzzling. The two first clauses where it appears are parentheses justifying that

connexion of priesthood with law, which the term "perfection" suggests. "For he of whom these things are said" confirms "another." "For it is evident" justifies the general principle by the conspicuous example. This may seem too subtle. But a comparison with ch. iv. 7 shews that the author did treat the Psalms as referring first of all to the Psalmists' own times. He probably cared less than we do now to distinguish between the primary and the ultimate references. The critical question had not been so sharply defined as it has been in these later days, and on the other hand his sense of continuity between Jesus the Christ and the ancient national life was clearer than ours.

(β) 15-19. *Πρόδηλον*, "openly evident," referred to the patent fact of the Lord Jesus' Judæan descent. *Κατάδηλον*, "evident by inference," takes up the evidence again and gives it another direction. "All that I have just said about the need of change which appears from the Psalmist's appeal, is still more abundantly clear from further reflexion on the nature of the work which (as we assert) our Lord has accomplished." This is what the author has now to say. The proof of the assertion rests on the experience of the faithful. The "if" in *v.* 15 warns the reader that the proof is not absolute, nor as yet taken for granted; for though *εἰ* might be used of mere fact, there would be always some *nuance* in the choice of such a word—either a *meiosis* to emphasize the actual, or a *hypothesis* to emphasize the conditional character of the assertion. But the Psalmist's appeal will be abundantly justified if another priest shall really be found now rising like the sun upon the expectant world, whose characteristic is power to

accomplish the need of men and the purpose of God—that power springing from an unfailing source of invincible life; all of which is in marked contrast with the mechanical ordering of the Levitical ministrations. The one belongs to the spiritual fount of life, the other to the fleeting fashion of the dying world. The proof is not absolute, yet even at this point it begins to appear reasonable, for this mechanical, arbitrary order has as a matter of fact begun to run its course out and to submit to abolishing. It has proved weak and ineffectual. And in proportion as this long accepted authority breaks down, there grows nearer and nearer in its place a hope which is more than a substitute for it, a better and stronger possession altogether. Even by the mere hope men are doing what the old authority never enabled them to do, finding the reality of worship and drawing towards the presence of God. For the comparative neglect of ritual and recourse to more simply spiritual approach to God was not confined to the Christian Church. It had already begun to shew itself within Judaism.

(γ) 20–22. No oath of God went with the appointment of the tribe of Levi or the family of Aaron to priestly functions. With the Psalmist's priest it was different. An oath of God confirmed his priesthood as one that should never be superseded. There is the point. If God had signified in any way that the Aaronic priesthood was to abide for ever, its supersession could not be contemplated; the oath of God, as has been already declared in ch. vi., is but an addition to the divine purpose which is in itself immutable. But there is no indication of such immutable purpose with regard

to the family of Aaron; the change of arrangement may be expected without irreverence. How far greater in strength and majesty is then this eternal agreement or covenant—for so by a general application of the term the way is prepared for the technical use of *διαθήκη* below—of which the surety is who? Not indeed by way of surprise, since all has been leading up to it, but by a bold substitution of the name Jesus for the unnamed subject of the Psalm, is the gate opened for the plain speaking with which this lesson in development shall conclude. Melchizedek, a priest-king after the order of Melchizedek, a growing glory round this historic king, a mystery which calls more and more loudly for explanation—those are the steps. And now in the author's judgement the time has come, and the name and character of Jesus will properly crown the ascent. The argument will be completed by the disciples' experience of their Master. He is the *ἔγγυος*, "surety," not merely the *μεσίτης*, "intermediary" or introducer of this covenant. Those who know the life and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth can have no doubt of God's will and purpose for the new world on which the day is now dawning.

(δ) 23-25. One short word further about the Aaronic priests—their mortality is ever driving them as it were from their posts, "they are hindered from continuing,"—and then the author passes to the realities of the Church's life. Jesus (who has now been openly named) can never be disturbed in His inviolable priesthood. The ultimate cause of this inviolable right lies in that eternal appointment which the Psalmist's proclamation indicates. The *μένει* of *v. 3* is repeated with

εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα in order to make the principle as it were visible in a picturesque phrase, and the simple verb is the more striking here in contrast with the compound and relative παραμένειν; He does not survive, He absolutely abides. The eternal appointment is the ultimate cause, and from that flows the perfect sacerdotal ability which the faithful experience in its actual working. This experience is the key-stone which holds the whole argument of the chapter together. To this experience there is a double appeal: those who do set themselves to approach God through the Lord Jesus know it; and S. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (from whence the phrase "to make intercession for them" is derived) has stamped the experience with an emotional phrase which has made it current coin.

D. 26-28. "Such" looks back to the short description which is now to be amplified, but the emphatic word of connexion (as the scribe felt who prefixed καί, "even") is ἔπρεπεν, "became us." The response of the larger faith to the best aspirations of men completes the argument. Here follows therefore a Creed or Psalm of belief. Mankind has indeed a Godward impulse, gathered up in its Highpriest who draws it into God. Such a Highpriest must be, and His people confess Him to be, divinely pure, innocent. He has won His way out of the sphere in which the criminal and inimical can hinder. He has risen to the region of free eternal Spirit beyond the shadows of artificial things. He has won His way, and He has risen, for He did first move with mortal difficulty through that lower sphere of conflict, in which the many highpriests in their broken succession still perform shadowy functions daily repeated

and daily in vain; for they still remain on a level with the other worshippers and have never yet so treated sin as to stand out clear on the Godward side of them. But that the true Highpriest has done. He too has offered for the sin of the people and for His own, since in a very real sense He shared those sins; up to the utmost limit of possible trial. His relation to sin was just the same as other men's up to that point. But at that point He rose above them. He made their sin His own and overcame it in himself and did away with it in himself by a gradual process of more and more perfect obedience; never checked in developement by His once yielding to evil; and at last completed by one decisive act of self-sacrifice in which "sinlessness" became freedom, the will being wholly and for ever lost and found in the divine will, the hindrances of mortal discipline transfigured by eternal Spirit.

The paragraph ends with an antithesis which elsewhere might be considered even too elaborate; as a conclusion to this Philonic chapter it is suitable. "Law" with its rigid severity is answered by "word" with all the associations of life and growth that had gathered round that term: "mortal men" in the plurality of brief succession by "Son," one, defined as by a conspicuous title, and associated with the same quoted words which have already (v. 5 f.) attended on it—carrying with it an air of divinity. And these last words themselves set perfectness and eternity against the infirmity of the earlier generations. The second member of the antithesis is enlarged by the addition of "oath" to "word." Nor is this without effect. The oath adds sanction to the change which the whole chapter has, by a kind of venture, traced

and commended. And the note of time "after the law," brings this change under the author's favourite principle of developement, which is part of his idea of priestly efficacy.

VIII. The pith of the argument, as already stated and as it is to be carried on to its deepest issue, is that we have a Highpriest, who in one definite past moment entered upon his regal state of priesthood in heaven the true sanctuary. That sanctuary (2-6) is figured by the ancient ritual term *σκηνή*, Tabernacle, which enables the author to explain his idea of a heavenly sanctuary more clearly. The priestly offering to which he refers as the occasion of the great Priest's exaltation, was sacramentally one with His death on the Cross, and found no place in the common round of priestly offices on earth, not even of the lowest rank. That is all to its advantage, for they with all their ritual were ancient indeed, and divinely appointed imitations of heavenly patterns, but only imitations—in fact fleeting shadows. The great highpriestly service belonged to a different order. It was not imitative but sacramental; even its earthly manifestation was one with its eternal reality. And though the actual offering was sacramentally fixed to a definite moment in time the priestly consummation which it brought with it is lasting (*τέτυχεν, 6*), and may better be described by deepening the image, and taking up the idea (already introduced in vii. 22) of the Covenant which lies beneath all ordinances of worship. The heavenly priesthood belongs to the real and spiritual covenant, which (like all these realities) may be found promised in the Old Testament when it is read as a prophetic (cf. i. 1) rather than as a ritual book.

Then follows the passage from Jer. xxxi. Modern

critics doubt whether Jeremiah himself used these words. It might seem a question which would little interest the writer of this Epistle, since he merely assigns the quotation to its primary author, the LORD God. Yet that is not certain. For if he were indeed writing this letter when the Jewish war with Rome was imminent, Jeremiah's situation when Jerusalem was besieged by the Chaldaeans, would rouse his sympathy and commend the quotation to his friends. Perhaps he would have answered, had he heard the critical objection, that whether Jeremiah's actual words or no, they excellently express the heart of all his prophetic doctrine and may be quoted as his. They also express the very heart of his own doctrine. First they sanction what he has already ventured to write about the shadowy, temporary character of Levitical ritual; they shew that so long ago as Jeremiah's time its removal was contemplated and promised; and he sums up this part of his deduction from the prophecy in a sentence (13) the solemnity of which chimes in with the signs of his own times, and suggests that the hour of fulfilment is at hand. Then (11) the Prophet's declaration that in the coming days the bonds of merely national religion shall be broken and all men (for so he might fairly enlarge the sense) shall know the LORD, entirely suit his own exhortation to his friends not to fall back into Judaic narrowness, but to trust the larger faith of the Christian Church and serve the cause of true Christship, expecting and co-operating with universal salvation in the despised ways of peace. And thirdly it is to be remembered that our paragraphs and chapter divisions are not the author's, and that the emphasis of *v.* 13 is not so final as our printers make

it appear. It is the "Covenant," not the "vanishing away," that is taken up again in ch. ix., and it is the forgiveness of sins which is repeated in x. 18 where the quotation is at last dismissed. That is to say, the Levitical priesthood, the servile term in his analogy, is not the great thing in the author's mind. We read his Epistle with our eyes fixed upon Leviticus, and by turn admire his courage in superseding that document, or reverse his judgement and still force the divine priesthood into the mould of the antique forms. But he, pathetic though his resignation of a ritual which perhaps in its later form he had actually practised may be, sets it aside in his letter with little talk about the matter, and presses on from the mere analogy he started from, to the sacramental expression of reality, and then to the correcting of the besetting error of sacramentalists by insistence on the spiritual essence of it all. The introduction of Jeremiah's "New Covenant" is an important step in this last process.

The lightness with which he sits to the ritual detail of his analogy is ever to be remarked. Thus in the earlier verses of this chapter (3, 4) it is vain to ask whether a hint can be discovered for dating the Epistle before or after the fall of Jerusalem. If the particular reference be to the moment of death on the Cross, there were of course Jewish priests performing their services at that time and the conditional sentence is past not present, and says nothing about the day when the letter was written. But the reference, as a whole, is more general than that, not to Jewish priests but to all earthly priesthood; and this would rule out the appeal to the verse for fixing a date, even though the conditional sentence be

construed as a present one. In like manner καθ' ἡμέραν, "daily," in the last chapter (vii. 27) is no mistake about the Day of Atonement or the particular duties of a Jewish highpriest, but a general term to express the whole use and wont of earthly rituals in which priests and people are alike involved. This looseness of interpretation is the more allowable in that place, since ἀρχιερέυς (highpriest) is frequently used in later Greek, (perhaps in the Gospels) as all but a synonym for ἱερέυς, (priest). But if this writer drops into that abuse of language sometimes, it is evident from viii. 4, οὐδ' ἂν ἦν ἱερέυς, that he still uses ἀρχιερέυς with precision when he wishes, and like ἀρχιποίμην in 1 Peter, so ἀρχιερέυς in this Epistle, when applied to our Lord, has its special significance; He stands in the line of priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, but He fulfils that line as consummation and source, including in His liturgic efficacy all the priesthood of mankind.

IX. The word ἔλεως, "merciful," at the end of the quotation from Jeremiah gives a priestly ring to its promise of forgiven sin, and is the essential link (as opposed to ἀφανισμόν, "vanishing away," the immediate link) with this following chapter. For here the main subject is the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. This will be explained in its most penetrating significance in ch. x. Here, according to his habit, the author first sets it forth in a pictorial manner, using for that purpose analogies from Old Testament. And, as in other places, we recognize that these analogies are marshalled with a light hand; exact correspondence and consistency is not his aim. Thus the Day of Atonement (6-8) gives place to Jeremiah's New

Covenant (15-17); that leads back to the Sinaitic Covenant and its sacrifices (18-22); and in the next verse (23) a passage is contrived to the Day of Atonement again.

Throughout the chapter "blood" is the ruling word. The Levitical theology, that the blood is the life, no doubt underlies the whole: if blood did not mean life, it would be a very formal thing to say (14) that the blood of Christ shall cleanse conscience. But though that Jewish theology was doubtless presupposed by author and friends alike, the undertone of reference in that verse (14) would be to Calvary and the Cup at the Last Supper. That Cup and the Lord's recorded words in giving it to His disciples explain the introduction of the word *διαθήκη*, "covenant," at this point. The unusual turn given to the language in *v.* 16 is perhaps due to the memory of the Lord's anticipatory declaration of His shed blood and death. It is possible that the language of Roman testamentary law has been adopted by the writer (who is apt to take his advantage wherever he finds it) but it is misleading to say roundly that he changes the meaning of *διαθήκη*. In whatever sense the Synoptists used *διαθήκη* to represent our Lord's Aramaic, in that sense he uses the same Greek word here.

That there should be a reference here to the Last Supper is not a very bold hypothesis. Mr. Kirsopp Lake speaks of the developement of Christian doctrine "from the belief that the Messiah was Jesus and that He was speedily coming to set up the Kingdom of God, to the creed in which the original meaning of the word 'Messiah' or 'Christ' was almost wholly forgotten, and Jesus was regarded as a Redeemer God,

and the Sacraments became the real centre of Christianity. That we find one type dominant in Jerusalem in the middle of the first century, and the other type dominant in Rome in the middle of the second seems incontrovertible"; and he suggests that "the existence of the eclectic type of God-fearer is an extremely important factor in the situation." Now in the Gospel of S. John there is no narrative of the institution of the two church sacraments, but there are explanations of their spiritual meaning, as though to correct a tendency to degrade what had already become a, if not the, dominant influence in church life. It is remarkable that in this Epistle less interest or sympathy is shewn towards this tendency: we seem to be dealing with inheritors of the "type dominant in Jerusalem." But there are references which are hardly ambiguous, and here too it would seem that this sacramental system of the Church was taken for granted. There is in fact just the likeness and the difference between this Epistle and S. John which might be expected, if the date of the Epistle is shortly before A.D. 70, and if its writer and readers were not Greeks of Asia Minor nor even eclectic God-fearers, but men of Jewish descent; not indeed of the same class as those simple Jerusalem believers who fled before the siege to Pella and planted that trans-Jordanic Christianity which (as some think) preserved a continuity with Ebionism (cf. Renan), but though unlike them in their Hellenic education and intellectual fitness for developing doctrine, still like them in their retrospective fidelity to the days of the Lord's flesh.

For whether the secondary reference here to the

institution of the Church sacrament be clear or faint, it is but indirect. The main interest is in the larger principle of all sacrament, and it is concentrated upon the Cross itself. The sacramental character is brought out by a contrast. In the earlier part of the chapter the golden magnificence of the ancient ritual is depicted. Then over against this is set the eternal worth of the Christian realities. There is no sacrament there, only an antithetical correspondence; the one does not touch the other, there is no interaction; the one is to be let go because the other is within reach. But the blood of Christ, His visible shame and death, is not contrasted with His indissoluble life and eternal work of salvation. These two interact; they are in fact one. The blood was seen, on earth, the salvation was wrought in heaven. *Εἰσῆλθεν . . . εὐράμενος*, He entered at the moment He had found; the temporal moment of death passed into the eternal, spiritual moment of heavenly sacrifice. The power of that sacrifice is signified by three terms in this chapter. It is eternal redemption (12), the remission of sin (22, 26, 28), and the hope of Christ's coming "a second time" (28). And the reality of the sacramental grace is further defined by the claim upon the worshippers for their co-operation; they have been called (15), and they must be watchful, expectant, with hearts sincerely set towards salvation (28).

The chapter falls into three main divisions:

A. 1-10. The transitory ritual.

B. 11-22. The real priest, sanctuary, covenant, and sacrifice.

C. 23-28. The Highpriest in heaven, his present advocacy, and His expected appearance.

A. 1-10. This may be subdivided into (1-5) the golden magnificence of the past; (6-10) what it points to in the present.

The ritual structure and ornament of the first covenant is described as it is seen in the Tabernacle of Exodus. Two predicative expressions emphasize its character. It was *λατρείας*, "a matter of ceremony," and *κοσμικόν*, "of the world-order not of heaven,"—"logical" we might say in our modern fashion, not "real." There is no reference to the later temple, and no argument can be drawn from the passage as to the author's familiarity with the ritual of his own day. Like Symmachus and Theodotion he calls the altar of incense *θυμιατήριον* instead of *θυσιαστήριον*, and since the Highpriest used to enter the Holy of Holies under its cloud of incense, he says it belongs to the Holy of Holies. But the impressive thing in his selection from the books of the Law, is the repetition of "gold," the religious cadence *κατασκιάζουσα τὸ ἱλαστήριον*, and the pathos of his affection for these glorious rites, from which he nevertheless turns to the reformation which awaited them.

For in 6-10 he describes the priestly and high-priestly services, and the Day of Atonement. Once more in a beautiful phrase "for himself and for the ignorances of the people" (adopted from him by the Greek Liturgies) he confesses the more than formal attraction of the old order. Then declares that all this was but a presignifying by the Holy Spirit, who inspired written books and all the mechanism of the past, of the opening of the way into the real sanctuary, and the perfecting of the worshipper, not externally with ritual

initiation, but according to inner consciousness of God with personal fulfilment. Such access and such completion of aspiring human nature was to come. The season or crisis of reformation was determined, which would be the end—and here he changes his yearning note to an almost brutal assonance of mean names—of meats and drinks and diverse washings, conventionalities of flesh.

B. 11–22. The yearning and the severity are natural and necessary. Antiquity always seems romantic and reformation dull. To defend reformation by the plea that it is to pass from shadow to reality is but cold. Yet reformers have their poetry as well as their zeal, and this author as much as any of them. His poetic touch is to oppose “eternal” to “golden,” and to bring into his new sphere of religion a sense of vastness, tragedy, and loyalty. The section may be subdivided into (11–14) the better sanctuary and the cleansing blood, (15–17) the new covenant, (18–22) remission of sin.

In the first subdivision (11–14) we are at once confronted with a question of text. Authority, grammar, and context, combine for the defence of *γενομένων*. But this participle must not be taken by itself as meaning “which have come on the scene of life,” but in close construction with *διά*; then (12) *οὐδὲ* carries on the participle *παραγενόμενος* (its rather ugly jingle with *γενόμενος* is one of many instances of a certain unprofessional carelessness in the scholarly author), and *οὐδὲ* has its proper meaning “nor . . . either.” It is probable that the correction *μελλόντων*, “to come,” arose from scribes, or public readers, not noticing this idiomatic

construction of the sentence. The argument may be thus stated :

Christ as contrasted with the ministers of that artificial order, came forward (not now only but in the age-long series of His manifestations) as Highpriest of a tabernacle greater, more complete, not built in the material sense at all ; the same in fact as what in S. Joh. xiv. 2, and perhaps S. Lk. ii. 49, is called " His father's house," *i.e.* the whole spiritual universe. By the supra-ritual service of this universal tabernacle that good which is the real though obscured quality of creation and human hope, had ever been ready for the true Highpriest to operate with. Now, in the consummation of that priesthood, He has entered at a definite moment once for all, into the sanctuary of that tabernacle. Nor in this temporal act is there imitation or make-belief, any more than there had been in the whole sacramental representation of the spiritual tabernacle. By the function of blood, which is His own priestly death and life, He made this priestly entrance ; dying He found, and living out of death He entered with, eternal redemption. This, *αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν*, is one of the concentrated phrases of the Epistle. The substantive carried with it certain definite historical associations, the redemption from Egypt (Ex. xv. 13), the redemption from Babylon (Is. xli. 14, *al.*). It, or its corresponding verb, had in Isaiah, and still more in the Psalms, gathered to itself a more inward, universal significance. Here the epithet carries that significance to completion. Something may no doubt remain in the author's sacramental mind of the time idea, but it is less " lasting for ever," that is implied than " in no way to be reversed," and the essential

character of the word is shewn by *διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου*, "through eternal Spirit," and *καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν*, "shall cleanse conscience," in *v. 14*. The heavenly life is the invisible power of the sacrament of the death, the eternal salvation is the power "passing understanding" which answers in the heavenly sphere to all that humanly intelligible virtue of the Cross which might be summed up in the Johannine sentence "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The idea of "the good things" (11) is elucidated by the sentence which follows. As the ritual of the Day of Atonement had in the outward sphere of human life, where even morality depends on conventional institutions, an effect of consecration by way of cleansing contracted impurities, so in the sphere of reality, where Christ interacts with the promptings and influences of the divine Spirit of true life, His blood may be trusted to wash away the alien evil which clogs man's natural consciousness of God. The result will be that he is set free from all the use and wont which seems to be the necessary condition of action, but is really fatal to true action, and is enabled to respond to the ideal morality of the Gospel which is the supra-ritual service of God who lives and has fresh stores of growing life to satisfy all the developing needs of duty, as for instance that new and not yet paralleled perplexity of the readers of this letter.

(15-17). These verses take up again the term "new covenant" in order to develop the thought of Christ's death. A *διαθήκη* involves death; that is why He is presented as a mediator of a covenant. Possibly the other sense of *διαθήκη*, "will or testament," is glanced

at, though the analogy would hardly be complete, since the mediator of a will would hardly be the testator but what would now be called the executor, and his death would not come into the matter. But in any case there is no necessity to bring in that other meaning, for covenants were made with sacrifice, and the sacrifice might be understood as representing the death of some party to the transaction, and there seems no conclusive reason to deny that *ὁ διαθέμενος*, "the one who has arranged things," might be used of the "mediator." Certainly *ἐπὶ νεκροῖς*, "over dead bodies," *φέρεισθαι*, "to be represented," and *μὴ τότε* (if that reading be accepted), "the idea is that not then," are all phrases which seem to be chosen to express a theory of sacrificial covenant. But still more remarkably do they suit our Lord's words and action at the Last Supper where He, still living in the flesh, spoke of the Bread and Wine as His broken Body and His shed Blood. According to S. Mark He spoke then of the Covenant, and other accounts actually give the phrase "new covenant" which may be said to be implied in the apocalyptic language of S. Mark. The author's meaning seems to be this. We have contemplated Christ's death. It is to explain the necessity and efficacy of that death that we use the analogy of the Covenant. Jeremiah had associated his promise of forgiven sin and communion with God, with a "new covenant." The Lord took up the same idea in His Last Supper when, anticipating His death and the Kingdom of God which should be inaugurated by His death, He stood between God and man as the mediator of this new covenant; representing His death as death always must be represented in covenants, but representing

His own death which was really to take place and did take place. We may well believe, as He did, that His death, thus solemnized, was able to bring in the new age in which all the transgressions of the past would be taken away and the children of the Kingdom, the summoned guests and heirs, should realize the promise that hitherto had been entrusted to their faith.

So the author continues, doubling back upon his thought (18--22), by stating the general principles of covenant-making through sacrifice, and illustrating them by a reference to the covenant inaugurated or "mediated" by Moses; there too the rule was observed, there was a transaction by means of blood. It may be that in the tradition of the Church, our Lord's words were commonly associated with that Sinaitic covenant, and the writer does not wish to ignore the tradition. But it is also convenient to him to make once more this definite reference to the ritual death of brute victims. He can thus sum up his general principle in the forcible sentence "apart from blood-ritual remission does not take place," and also lead on to his final statement of the absolutely spiritual character of the sacrifice of Christ.

C. (23--28). That statement is made in the last section of the chapter. The artificial rites are distinguished from the real by an accumulation of contrasted terms; "copies," "made with hands," "like in pattern only"—"the heavenly things," "the super-celestial sphere itself," "the essentially true," "heaven itself," and at last "the face of God." Besides that there is an evident attempt to break free from the language of analogy, and as it were to proclaim the sacramentalist's ultimate faith in a reality beyond all sacramental description. Thus

“better sacrifices” in the plural though the divine sacrifice is essentially one, is perhaps a studied carelessness. Ἐμφανισθῆναι, “to appear,” a word which carries associations of divine self-manifestation, is deeper yet simpler than a merely ritual term would be. And at the end, though a picture is again suggested of the worshipping people waiting outside for the return of their priest from the sanctuary (cf. Lk. i. 21, 22) yet ὀφθήσεται, “shall be seen,” is still barer in its simplicity than ἐμφανισθῆναι. Another simple word of the same class is πεφανερωται, “hath been manifested” (26), which has a different connotation here from both the others, and seems to point to the manifestation on the scene of human history of the Christ who has been present, but hitherto imperfectly recognized, all through Israel’s life. So that the argument of the whole section has three steps, which may be thus described :

(1) Evidently from these considerations it follows that something better than the ancient ritual applies to anything that may be imagined as a sanctuary in heaven. And so the fact has been; for Christ did enter heaven itself, to be at this very moment shewn as in theophany for us before our God (23, 24).

(2) A theophany which surpasses all sacrificial analogies yet springs from a single offering of himself, once for all offered in time on earth, at that moment of crucifixion—it would be terrible to fancy that it had been repeated and we may not do so—wherein the Christ of all the ages has been perfectly and finally manifested in the manhood of our Lord (25, 26).

(3) That moment was a real death, like men’s deaths not to be repeated, and like men’s deaths followed by its

consequence. Yet eminent above the death and judgement of the mass, for His death was the sin-bearing and sin-removing of which the prophet (Is. liii.) uttered his oracle; and the sequel to His death is that coming (like the priest's coming forth to the expectant people from the sanctuary where he has finished his ritual atonement) in which He shall be seen as with the eyes by those who are waiting in their faith; and that sight shall be salvation, *i.e.* separation from all evil, the consummation of the purpose of God (27, 28).

One point of considerable interest remains. What is implied by *νῦν*, "now," in *v.* 24? In 26 *νυνί* seems to be a logical conjunction = "as things actually are"; so *νῦν* or *νυνί* (there is a doubt about the reading) was used in viii. 6. But *νῦν* in 24 is evidently a particle of time, and though it would be possible to understand it as referring to the sacramental moment of the crucifixion and the corresponding offering, as if it stood placarded before the world for all time (cf. Gal. iii. 1 with Lightfoot's note), that is not natural here. Nor does the aorist *ἐμφανισθῆναι* suit the interpretation that the ascended Lord's perpetual intercession on the basis of the one offering is meant; contrast the present *ἐντυγχάνειν*, vii. 25. It remains to suppose a reference to the special trial of the readers in the troubled times which were imminent when this letter was written. If so a further propriety may perhaps be recognized in the choice of this peculiar word. The Lord (it seems impossible to doubt this) had connected His "Coming" with a season of severe trial, which was to arrive within the lifetime of some who heard Him. He seems to have described this season of trial as being the time of the

overthrow of Jerusalem. If He meant that, and if this letter was written when the Roman war was breaking out, the coincidence was striking. But even though either of those hypotheses be doubtful, some coincidence remains, and this is the most remarkable of those hints and suggestions of which there are many in the Epistle, that the author saw in the crisis of his days a real though not the final coming of the Lord. This insight of his marks a definite step in the development of the Church's apocalyptic faith. As the Epistle puts it a little further on (x. 37), in "but a very little while" the anxious expectation of the end will be allayed. Christ will have come, and for the final coming His disciples may wait without haste, and without careful dogma as to the manner in which it shall take place (cf. I Joh. iii. 2, *ἐὰν φανερωθῆ*). Meanwhile He will have indeed come; the days of "fightings without, fears within" are over; and a new loyalty to Christ as the present leader and captain of His church militant begins.

X. 1-18. In this section the simplifying of the thought so as to carry it beyond analogy into its essence, is completed. The sacrifice of Christ was the union of His will with God's; that is the gist of it. But terms of analogy come in, though mainly to be again rejected, because the author, as his habit is, uses a passage from the Old Testament to express his mind, and this passage itself is so constructed as to present the essential truth by contrasting it with the analogy.

There are four divisions: (a) 1-4 introduction, (b) 5-10 the doctrine of "will," (c) 11-14 the whole consistent scheme displayed, (d) 15-18 the witness of conscience to its truth.

(*a*). 1-3. An introduction in which the author sums up again what he has been elaborating, *i.e.* the ineffectual, transitory character of the ancient rites. But in doing this he makes, as it were, a happy find of an expressive definition of that character, a definition too which does justice to their comparative value; they are an ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν, "a recollecting of sins." It is perhaps really justifiable to call this "a happy find," for the broken grammar of the sentence preceding (1, 2) as it is written in the best MSS., may be due not to a primitive error in copying, but to a certain carelessness of the author himself such as might be possible in a letter written by a scholarly person even though he had planned his whole argument carefully. If the Epistle be really a letter the separate sentences would not have been all thought out beforehand; indeed there are other signs of a like carelessness, such as his tendency to drop into metre. And just at this point a slip (which a less literary person would feel obliged to correct) is particularly natural; he is hurrying to the point which these lines merely serve to introduce.

(*b*). 5-10. The difference between Christ's sacrifice and the ancient rites has been already marked by the word ἰδίου, "his own" (ix. 12). They were imitative and conventional, and operated in an alien life; His was His own and therefore a real and personal transaction. It is a person's mind or will that makes an act his own, and if one of those personal functions is to be chosen to represent the whole, a man of Jewish descent would certainly choose "will," though a Greek, at least an ancient Athenian, might prefer "mind." This author accordingly chooses "will," and in terms of will describes

the deepest significance of that act of Christ which he has hitherto spoken of by the analogy of sacrifice. But he has found the way to this solution of his theological problem in the Old Testament. A Psalmist had spoken of the ritual sacrifices only to reject them, and to declare his resolve to do God's will, and his belief that such obedience, such sympathetic obedience, was what God himself preferred to sacrifices. Nothing, thinks our author, could better describe the Lord's attitude to religion and life; and by a very natural form of expression, he puts the words into the Lord's mouth, dramatically, as His own utterance on entering upon His ministry. And first we notice how true to history this is. Psalmists had comparatively ignored the sacrifices against which Prophets had even strongly spoken. Philo and many of the Jews of the dispersion, perhaps more definitely still certain religious societies among the Jews, had put sacrifices very much in the background of their piety. Not sacrifice but a more reasonable service was already the essence of religion to many good men in Israel when our Lord was born. And the Gospels shew that He did, though in no party spirit, throw in His lot with that quiet and progressive party. "Sacerdotal" is not a word which need have other than a good meaning. But it is plain that the Gospels are not "sacerdotal."

However the negative aspect of the quotation is of secondary importance. The main point is that it expresses so aptly our Lord's obedience, His losing and finding His own will in the will of His Father. All the accumulated analogy of sacrifice fails to reach so deep as that; indeed we can go no deeper. For in that will the whole purpose of the creation is folded up (10). In

the centre as a focus stands the Cross. That is the picture language which comes most readily to our lips. The author too knows that he must get back to such language if he would be terse and clear; but he prefers his own imagery to that which we have learned from S. Paul, and says "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." That word "body" is from the Septuagint not from the original Hebrew. There is no need to labour this. The author uses the Septuagint and therefore quotes its rather remarkable word; and he is not the person to let a remarkable word lose its character in his citation of it. But "body" has nothing to do with the chain itself of his argument; the argument would be just as strong without it, and there is no need to dwell upon it in an exposition of the Epistle. To return then; running up to that focus is all the past age of the world. Christ's death was no solitary inexplicable event; it was part of the divine scheme of salvation. Flowing forth from it again is all the future. The consequence of Christ's death—seen to be the necessary consequence when this divine scheme of life is recognized, and the Lord Jesus is placed as Christ within it—is (according to the old Galilean phraseology), the coming of the kingdom of heaven (cf. xii. 28), according to this new Alexandrine phraseology, the consecration of God's people—"in which will we have been sanctified or consecrated" (*ἡγιασμένοι*). All is predestined and accomplished in that will which was completed or satisfied by union with the returning or "entering" will of Christ.

(C). 11-14. This paragraph continues the last division with hardly a break. It shews the whole ritual

of Judaism, perhaps rather of the wide world, testifying to man's natural desire for this consecration. It then holds forth as it were to view, the destined task now accomplished by Christ. The implied comment is "See how natural and consistent it all is." Once seen, once accepted, there can be no more doubt; the truth of it is self-evident. This is the ultimate argument of all religion, an argument which passes from the intellect to the will; which is a satisfying argument only to the "converted" man. For whom too the paradox that follows presents no difficulty. He understands how the thing is done once for all and completely, while yet it remains that the end should "come" or "become" (*τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκδεχόμενος κ.τ.λ.*); and how *οἱ ἡγιασμένοι*, "those who have been perfectly consecrated" in the will of God, are still *οἱ ἀγιαζόμενοι*, those who are in process of consecration in the world. It is best to take *εἰς τὸ διηνεκές*, "for perpetuity," with "having offered one sacrifice for sins." The emphatic *μίαν* prevents any misconception as of a repeated sacrifice. The Greek phrase (*εἰς τὸ διηνεκές*, not *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*) shews too that the idea of an "eternal" sacrifice would be out of place; and this Greek phrase is what makes the connexion with *ἐκάθισεν* improbable. It was "for ever," "eternally," that the Lord took His royal seat. This "in perpetuity" simply indicates the abiding efficacy of the sacrifice.

(D). 15-18. The last paragraph followed the preceding without logical break, yet it was a fresh paragraph for it brought in a highly important idea of its own, not indeed for the first time in the Epistle. That idea was the forgiveness of sins. Here that idea is brought into clearest light. The completeness and consistency of

God's scheme, with Christ's death for its central point, has been held forth for the believer to recognize. Now the author reminds us that Jeremiah (in the quotation already made) had promised this; the aptness of ancient prophecy is the final coincidence which quite completes that self-revealing scheme. But, he adds, Jeremiah's chief thought was of the remission of sins in the happy days to come, and now it is the conscience, sin-burdened once but cleansed at last, that recognizes this truth as really standing self-revealed.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is a priestly book. A man with a priestly mind wrote to friends like minded; else what use to choose the priestly analogy. But it is the mark of such minds to sympathize with consciences that feel the stain even more than the chain of sin. Throughout this chapter that hidden sympathy underlies the visible logic.

And perhaps a little more needs to be said. It can hardly fail to be noticed that the author felt something of this sympathy even towards the Levitical rites. They were in themselves but shadows, yet even so something of tenderness and yearning, some touch of true priesthood, was about them. It might be explained by saying that so far as they were ceremonies they were shadows, but so far as they involved the sympathetic ministry of men, they passed out of the region of shadows. Or we may frankly confess that there is a certain, not unpleasing, looseness in the logic of the Epistle. It must almost necessarily be so. Life cannot absolutely be divided into separate sections. No part that has any, even the slightest, touch of real life can be wholly a shadow. And if (as the Epistle certainly recognizes) even the Levitical sacrifices

did offer Israel some measure of consolation and encouragement, it is only in a scheme on paper that they can be thoroughly set aside. There is a certain looseness in the logic of the author. It is partly caused by his own sympathy being larger than his formal plan. But it does not spoil his plan, for that plan is more than a formal one; the ultimate argument he employs is addressed to the will and not to the intellect. Nor does it spoil even his formal argument, for that too is more genial than formal; he appeals to man's general instinct for self-sacrificing love, and he does find more of this in the world at large than at the altars of the Old Covenant; yet if there be some there too, it is worth while to mar the neatness of a syllogism in order to give thanks for it.

However the line of eternal priesthood which our Lord has completed is greater than the Levitical line and really different from it. All action "on the Godward side" which the world has ever seen led up to Him, "after the order of Melchizedek." His death is to the author of this Epistle the perfection of all the self-sacrificing love that ever has appeared or ever shall be spent in the whole world; and it is effectual for cleansing and so for opening access to God.

PART III.—CHAPTER X. 19—XIII.

EXHORTATION

ARGUMENT is ended. By analogy of priesthood the author has tried to raise his friends' low estimate of

Jesus, whom they had acknowledged as Christ but only in an imperfect sense. Unlike the early Church of Jerusalem they had looked upon Him merely as an example and a teacher. He tried to lead them to the more sublime Christology of tradition by shewing that He was the divine Christ expected by Israel and recognized by the Apostles. This he did by insisting upon His position as heir of all the Christship manifested in the Old Testament and in Israel's history.

But it is never possible to revive an old tradition without going forward, and developing its essential meaning in accordance with the demands and difficulties of new minds. Thus he accepted his friends' feeling for the real manhood of the Lord and acknowledged the difficulty which this involved. Manhood means likeness to other men and obscures what is unique in the person contemplated. The manhood of the Lord meant even more; His despised life and shameful death seemed to make Him even less fit than other men to be an author of salvation. Hence the writer faced this shame. He shewed that suffering was, so to say, the greatest common measure of manhood; the Lord's sufferings made Him brother, not merely to Israel but to all the human race; and more than that, His glory was realized in His humiliation.

From this he was able to take up and elaborate his analogy of priesthood. As a priest stands on the Godward side of men and by outward actions works eternal good, so Jesus the Lord, through His humiliated life and above all in His death on the Cross, achieved for men eternal salvation.

But a mere analogy is of little worth. The thing

needed was to shew that this action of the Lord was real : analogy with the unreal liturgies of the Levitical or other institutional priesthoods did not prove this.

Therefore he looked beyond them, and saw running all through history a service of men on the Godward side of men by which really and truly God ever had been bringing men and all things to Himself. For this "natural" and eternal priesthood the Old Testament furnished an artificial name—"after the order of Melchizedek"—and adopting this term he elaborated and illustrated his idea. In doing this he sometimes fell into artificial reasoning himself, and in so far as he did this, his words fail to touch us closely. But he only did so now and then ; the main impulse of his thought is as effective now as ever. We understand his sacramental principle, that what is natural is spiritual ; and having once grasped his conception of a natural priesthood in all life, we accept his conclusion that this natural priesthood must culminate in its own perfection ; that as it has always been manifested in service, so it must culminate in suffering, even the suffering of shame and death ; and finally, we are ready to drop analogy with him, and to recognize that in the sinless will of our Lord the desired consummation has been attained.

But "will" brings in again a thought which has never been allowed to slumber throughout the argument. God's will, Christ's will, the will of men ; this is "the one and many." All three wills are real, and none of them can force another, but all interact. Through "free will," and only so, unity is possible. The salvation of which the Lord became author cannot be imposed upon men ; it must be willingly accepted. The readers of this letter

cannot be persuaded by mere argument ; they must share the will of the Christ, and do His duty themselves as He did. But this can be done ; for the will of God is the source and home of all wills, and the death of Christ, the sacrifice of the supreme High Priest, was ordered by God's will, and accepted by His Son's will, as a means for cleansing conscience, for renewing life, for freeing wills to follow His.

At this point then the author passes from argument to exhortation. "Do the duty set before you," he says, "resolve to share the will of Christ, and doing this you will yourselves clinch my argument."

But before starting upon the last, hortatory, division of the Epistle a remark must be interpolated. It may be objected that in this summary, as well as in the course of exposition, a good deal has been read into the text which is not expressed therein. That is true, but no ancient letter can be interpreted otherwise. A letter presupposes a community of unexpressed thought between the writer and his readers. The idea of the natural eternal priesthood presupposes all that Old Testament history and doctrine which is suggested by the titular phrase, "after the order of Melchizedek." The belief in the effect of Christ's death and its central position in the foreordaining will of God was part of the inheritance of the early Church from later Judaism ; the Jews had believed in a world scheme of divine salvation, and the Lord had taught His apostles that the turning-point of that scheme must be His death. The author had not to teach this as something new, but to approach it and to turn it to his friends' view in such a manner as to make it a reality to them. So again his argument

about the will of God and Christ and men, is rich in associations with S. Paul's "in Christ," and with that national communion and unity which informs the whole Old Testament; already there a summing up of the many in the Christ had been displayed, and a moral, that is a free-will explanation of it given by the Prophets.

Such presuppositions lie behind the letter. The letter itself, especially by its Old Testament master-phrases, affords hints for our guidance in recovering them. We may be mistaken sometimes when we think we are recovering them; but the risk must be run. Without consideration of that background we cannot interpret our author at all.

And on the whole we shall recover the background more certainly by following his Old Testament hints and by remembering the common inheritance of the Church, than by comparing him phrase by phrase with Philo. His language is peculiar to him among the Apostolic writers and the Alexandrians had taught it him, but his thought is, like all artistic thought, traditional, and his great tradition was the same as that of the general Church.

X. 19 to end. The argument is finished and from this point to the end the author presses the exhortation to which his argument leads. The whole falls into four divisions corresponding to the modern chapters.

A. x. 19-39. The Highpriest has opened the way into the sanctuary of God; let us enter, making a venture of faith.

B. xi. The reality and power of faith.

C. xii. The imminent contest; its consolations and its perils; the largeness of its issue.

D. xiii. Rules of life and direct appeal to loyalty.
Prayer for the necessary strength of will,
and greetings.

All moves upon the basis of a dominant note; that the unseen Lord Jesus is speedily to be met, and in that meeting a new life is to begin.

A. x. 19-39. The subdivisions are—

- (i.) 19-25. Let us draw near to God; His day is quickly coming.
- (ii.) 26-31. And disloyalty is terrible now.
- (iii.) 32-39. Renew the courage of former days, for the faith is ours.

(i.) 19-25. Argument is completed by action ("therefore"), and so far as the author has convinced his friends, he calls upon them to act upon their conviction; so far as their intellect still hesitates, he urges them to clinch the matter by exercise of will. "Jesus, as we hold, has opened the way of approach to God; let us walk His way and draw near."

It is impossible not to feel that this drawing near is not a pious generality, but a particular step forward in the face of particular difficulty. The author's language becomes still more significant in xii. 1-3, and at last in xiii. 13 he says something which must have been quite without ambiguity to his readers, though it remains partly obscure to us.

The word *παρρησία*, "boldness," cf. iii. 6, iv. 16, suggests that special confidence towards God which is the property of the community of the faith. It is akin to the "good conscience" of xiii. 18, the "conscience of God" (1 Pet. ii. 19) which is the normal consciousness of man, and though degraded by his contact with the

realm of death into "conscience" in the popular sense of the word, has been restored through the sacrifice of Christ (ix. 14). In accordance with this double aspect, outer and inner, of "the faith" we have a double description in v. 22 of the concomitants of access—cleansed heart and baptized body. Of course washing with water had long been a ritual preparation even in pagan worship; cf. Aesch. fr. 32, *καλοῖσι λουτροῖς ἐκκελουμένος δέμας | εἰς ὑφίκριμνον Ἰμέραν ἀφικόμην*. But whether or no the influence of mystery-religions had anything to do with it, the two sacraments were becoming by this time the groundwork of church life, and though this author pays little special attention to them, it is natural that he should presuppose them. And the reference to the external rite is the more probable here, since in the antithesis of Jesus' own entrance (20) stress is laid on its sacramental visible character. The way *πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν* is the way of this visible death and indissoluble life; *πρόσφατον* being no doubt intended in what the writer believed to be its etymological sense, "a way, 'fresh slain' yet living." Westcott thinks that *τοῦτ' ἐστὶν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ*, "that is the way of His flesh," should be connected with "way" not with "veil." This does make the whole sentence consistent and is probably right. An emphatic final genitive is rather characteristic of rhetorical style (cf. Jam. ii. 1, and Origen's suggestion about *εὐδοκίας* in Lk. ii. 14). But the "common-sense" of readers of all ages has accepted the other construction, "through the veil, that is His flesh." And though Westcott says truly enough that "it is surprising that 'the flesh' of Christ should be treated in any way as a veil, an obstacle, to the vision of God in a place

where stress is laid on His humanity," there is not quite so much in this argument as might appear at first sight. In S. John where the Sacrament of the Incarnation is finally expressed, such looseness would indeed be surprising. In Hebrews where that sacramental principle is more tentatively sketched, it might perhaps be appropriate. Popular taste accepts the image readily; it may have also pleased the earlier writer's fancy. And there is in him a certain tendency to Platonic imperfection in the consideration of the flesh, cf. xiii. 3, xii. 23; he exalts "the days of His flesh" so nobly just because they were a problem to him.

Verses 19-22 are a transition from the analogy to the exhortation, and their picturesque imagery gives vigour to the opening sentences. But already the author has shewn a desire to pass beyond his analogy and here again he breaks away from it. In plain terms he urges steadfastness, fellowship, and readiness.

Readiness for what? He had brought the ancient church doctrine of the coming of Christ forward in ix. 28; almost abruptly it then seemed. But there had been a hint of it at the beginning of his letter, i. 6, and now it begins to be plain that he had had this thought in mind all through, and is about to take up again his earlier hints, and explain and emphasize them. In v. 25 he no doubt means by *ἐπισυναγωγῆν*, the Christian assembling for common worship, and *τισίν*, "some," is his urbane and playful way of administering a rebuke to these friends of his; they with their broad, educated minds, and perhaps with their well-to-do delicacy, do not care for these assemblies, nor for the ordinary discipline (cf. xiii 17 and Jam. ii. 1-9). But *ἐπισυναγωγῆν*

had other associations also, especially to readers of S. Paul (cf. 2 Thess. ii. 1), and in our author's subtle philological manner it leads to his solemn mention of "the day" which already more and more they behold approaching. "The day" of course is the regular term for the day of the Lord, the *Parousia*. But why and how do the readers of this letter "behold" it drawing near? If we may assume, as the latest criticism encourages us to do, that Mk. xiii. contains our Lord's own warnings of the signs of His coming, the natural answer will be that the writer recognizes those signs in the political disturbances of his own time, and is urging his friends to shew their loyalty to Christ by some definite act of allegiance which the crisis calls for. St. Luke's version (xxi.) shews that, after the event at all events, the Jewish war with Rome and the fall of Jerusalem were understood by the Church as a fulfilment, or a first fulfilment, of the Lord's warnings. Heb. xiii. 13 is most easily interpreted in connexion with that judgement of the Church, and it is at least plausible to suppose that this Epistle, written when that war had broken out and the coming catastrophe was evident to the unprejudiced eyes of the author, led the way to a modification of the Church's eschatological expectation. The final coming might still delay, but in the "trial" of those times the Lord would come in a real sense, and would inaugurate a new era for those who held faithful to Him and His supra-political peace; refusing to partake in revolutionary dreams of new Messiahship.

(ii.) 26-31. That is the thought which comes out in this next section. The wilful sin (26) is the desertion of the Lord and His truth for the long-drawn-out error

of militant Judaism, wherein no fresh deliverance can be found to take the place of that salvation which has been called in this Epistle "sacrifice." What that error will bring is that fiery judgement of God, which has ever been manifested when He overthrows cities (27), cf. Is. xxvi. 5 and 11. Here as in vi. 4 ff. no dogma is uttered limiting faith in the forgiveness of sins, but a natural consequence of a particular act is vividly declared.

Not but what the sin and sadness of that act are deeply felt (28, 29), but whereas in the old Law the punishment which hurt the offender was the marked thing, here the despite done to the Son of God transforms the whole idea of punishment. The Blood of the Covenant, the Spirit of Grace; these terms express what we call personality in its deepest sense. The offence is a violation of personal bonds; the punishment is a moral and mutual wound. Finally (30) the author concludes with a quotation from Deuteronomy (xxxii. 35 f.) which emphasizes the pitifulness of such a lapse, and entirely suits the circumstances as we have imagined them above. For the point of the passage in Deuteronomy is that the LORD will avenge His people without their needing to shew violence. This later Jewish war is lack of trust in the Protector of the nation, and those who take up arms put themselves in the position of His enemies instead of His dependents.

(iii.) 32-39. As in ch. vi. so here, a severe warning is followed by encouragement based on the remembrance of former faithfulness. That earlier faithfulness was the enduring of persecution soon after the readers had accepted the faith; φωτισθέντες, "after enlightenment,"

is a mode of expressing conversion, like that already used in *v.* 26, and is probably not yet a technical term for Baptism. The persecution seems to have been chiefly borne in their willing and active sympathy for brethren who suffered more sharply. The A.V., "for ye had compassion on me in my bonds" (*τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου*), is perhaps a modification of a reading known to Origen, "ye had compassion on bonds" (*τοῖς δεσμοῖς*), probably made by some one who read the Epistle as S. Paul's. But the true reading is represented by R.V., "on them that were in bonds" (*τοῖς δεσμίοις*). Such practical kindness to prisoners is recommended in *ch.* xiii. as likely to be required again in the new troubles which were imminent. Yet they had not only shewn such sympathy. They had themselves lost their property, thereby learning the Church's lesson of simplicity. For *ἑαυτοὺς* is the same as *ψυχὰς* in the Gospel—"if a man gain the whole world and lose his soul, himself." They endured even worse. The word that describes their personal suffering, *θεατριζόμενοι*, "made a spectacle as on a stage," would fit so well the cruelties of Nero that the reference is commonly supposed to be to his persecution. The inference follows that the letter is a good deal later than S. Paul's death, and that it was written to Rome. Obviously those inferences need not be drawn. The reference might be to a persecution at any time or place; we know too little of the earliest persecutions to decide. And a prejudice has been raised by Clement's apparent reference in somewhat similar language to Nero's abominations. The word may be simply an expressive one which suited the author's taste. It may even more probably be a literary reminiscence

of S. Paul's phrase in 1 Cor. iv. 9, "we are made a theatrical spectacle unto the world."¹

For however come by—and an Apostle need not have died long since to allow his letters to be read—there are reminiscences of S. Paul in this section of the Epistle. It might be mere coincidence that led the author to quote Deuteronomy (30) in the words of S. Paul (Rom. xii. 19) instead of the Septuagint, but it seems more likely to have been intentional since S. Paul's text on faith from Habakkuk follows immediately after (37 f., cf. Rom. i. 17, Gal. iii. 11). Yet this text is quoted here with a difference. The faith contemplated is essentially the same faith as S. Paul's, springing from union with Jesus Christ. But it is thought of in a particular way which corresponds more obviously than S. Paul's idea with the original intention of the words in Habakkuk. The writer of this Epistle, like the Prophet, is face to face with an imminent trial; like him he calls upon his friends to be steadfast in their trust towards God; and like him he expects a deliverer. Only this expectation is definite in the Epistle. The Lord Christ for whom the brethren are waiting is the deliverer. And this definite assurance is marked by the addition of the article to the participle *ἐρχόμενος*, which in the Septuagint stands without it and merely emphasizes *ἥξει*; "he (the unnamed subject of the prophet's vision) shall surely come and shall not linger." And as the simple Old Testament idea of faith is thus brought forward, so another Old Testament

¹In D* the reading is simply *ὄνειδίζόμενοι*, "being shamed." Of course that cannot be the original word, but the variation perhaps shews that *θεατριζόμενοι* was not so striking a term to early readers as it is to us,

idea is used to express the issue of such faith ; it is for the acquiring or possessing of soul, life, person, self—the thought of *v.* 34 (*ἐαυτοῦς*) is gathered up into this final encouragement. The term *περιποίησις* is the one used in *Mal.* iii. 17 where Israel is termed God's own possession (cf. *1 Pet.* ii. 9) and this gives depth to the hope here offered ; it is not merely the hope of private survival from the coming catastrophe, but also of increasing the divine lordship of the souls which are God's. With that thought again *2 Thess.* ii. 14 (*εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου*) may be compared, and it should be noticed that the noun is used three times by S. Paul, *1 Thess.* v. 9, *2 Thess.* ii. 14, *Eph.* i. 14. Throughout the latter part of this chapter the memory of S. Paul is strongly felt.

XI. And so *ch. xi.* opens with *ἔστιν*, no mere copula or enclitic, but an emphatic assertion of the reality of faith. It is as though the writer knew how his master Paul's doctrine of faith had been spoken against, and therefore, having made use of it, he would also stand up for it—"And, let them say what they will, there is such a thing as faith ; the whole record of our fathers' courage proves it ; faith it was that made them brave."

That is the main and simple idea in this roll of heroes. They were courageous through faith, and the application to the readers of the letter was obvious. But though mere examples do act upon the will, this writer and his readers were men of intellect and were more impressed when they could see somewhat deeply into the hidden springs of will. Nor was this other than a laudable desire, since it is just in those hidden springs that the union of the divine will with the wills of men

is realized. Therefore a *rationale* (rather than a definition) of faith is given before the achievements of faith are rehearsed (xi. 1). Faith is a reaching into the unseen; this will appear in all the examples that follow.

It is described as being *ἐπιζομένων υπόστασις*, "that which underlies all hope." This word *ὑπόστασις* has been already used twice in the Epistle. In i. 3 it signified that absolute being of God which is in itself unseen but is expressed and manifested in the Son of God. In iii. 14 a later reading for *ὑποστάσεως* is *πίστεως*, and the English version is content with a paraphrase, "confidence," which would suit either term. The Vulgate however keeps *substantiae* and adds (with some Greek MSS.) *eius*. This is nearer the true meaning; that Christship which underlies the whole Old Testament is signified; the readers are urged (as we might say) to be loyal to an idea. So here we might paraphrase "faith is the essence of hope"; wherever there is true hope a reality lies behind it. "Foundation" is a possible rendering of *ὑπόστασις*, as in the Psalm (lxxviii. 2) *ἐνεπάγγην εἰς ἰλὺν βυθοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπόστασις*, "where there is no bottom," cf. cxliii. 5, *τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ἀνυπόστατον*, "fathomless water"; but that is not personal enough for any of the passages in this Epistle. Though faith is not described here quite as S. Paul describes it, the emotion behind both descriptions is the same; it is personal attachment to the Lord. The author makes use of terms from the Alexandrine philosophy, but even exacter philosophers than he is would wish to employ their abstract terms in such a way as to reach through them to the living or personal heart of truth. He certainly does this, and his doctrine of faith will be best

understood if attention is paid to its likeness to rather than its difference from the Pauline or Johannine. Deep in the thought of all these apostolic writers works that affection towards the Lord Christ which they shared with the whole Church. Thus we are brought to a more satisfactory paraphrase than our first, and may say that faith is the inspiration, or the heart of hope. /

Then according to the manner of this Epistle, the former half of the sentence is balanced by a second clause *πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων*, "the proof or test of matters which the eye does not behold." The riddle of composition lies in just that "balance"; why is that necessary to the sense which seems merely a luxury to the ear? The addition here is necessary to the sense. It prevents the whole idea from being merely fanciful. To the first clause the objection might be brought: you buoy up false hopes by a sentimental faith. The answer follows in this latter clause: no; true faith is a test of ideas. If faith in the Lord Jesus can be applied to a hope or an enthusiasm that hope or enthusiasm may be trusted. The readers would apply this to those enthusiasms of their own troubled times from which their friend warns them, and to the other enthusiasm, their Christian "boldness," to which he strives to keep them steadfast. One was specious, the other stands the test.

And, since a close reasoner might say that this was begging the question (though unfairly, since one of the premisses in every syllogism in this Epistle is: "you have already given your allegiance to Jesus as the Christ"), he continues by asserting that this is what may be observed all through the history of Israel,—or even of the world, as told in Israel's sacred books, for *v.* 3

looks back to the history of the Creation in Gen. i. Yet it does more than that. It reminds the readers of their own faith as a whole; the faith they have inherited from their fathers, by which they accept the authority of their scriptures, and recognize the spiritual and divine source of all creation. But there is more than this. The term *αιῶνας* is used here, as in i. 2, in the exacter sense an Alexandrine would prefer. It is "the ages," the life of the world in its successive yet continuous and developing stages, which is thought of. The construction, *εἰς τὸ μὴ . . . γεγονέναι*, has afforded a puzzle for the grammarian, but it makes the most consistent sense if it be taken according to the strict rules of Attic Greek; "to the end that the thing which is beheld should be recognized as having come into being out of more than mere *phenomena*"—our popular use of this Greek word *phenomena* comes nearer to the sense than any native English one would. What is implied is this. It seems as though all went on by measurable cause and effect, great victories from the great battalions, etc., the trials of the present age from the actions of the last, the issues in the age to come from the accidents of this, and no purpose, no personal will, in the matter. But the faith of the Church, Jewish and Christian, says otherwise. Not only has God created all things, but by His decree the course of the ages has been ordered and fitted together so that the changes and chances of history are the manifestation of His will, and (it follows) in the present appearance of things His will is directing, and right faith tests the claims of either side in the contest and leads His servants to join their wills to His and co-operate to the appointed end. All this should be Jewish faith as much as Christian. Christian

faith adds (i. 2) that the Son through whom God manifests himself in history, and through whom He made the ages, and who by the decree of His power (i. 3) is bearing all things on to their goal, is the Lord Jesus Christ; so that in the crises of the times the Lord's presence or "coming" must be acknowledged.

But it is time to arrange the chapter more formally. It falls into three divisions (*a*) 3-16, (*b*) 17-31, (*c*) 32-38, preceded by an introduction (1, 2) and concluded by an epilogue (39, 40).

Introduction (1, 2). The reality and character of faith as proved from the divine history of Israel.

(*a*) (3-16). The origins; from the creation to Abraham; the patriarchs' distant view of the city of God.

(*b*) (17-31). The early history of the chosen people; from the sacrifice of Isaac to the entry into Canaan; the making of the nation.

(*c*) (32-38). The nation's heroisms, especially in Maccabean times, the period of the "Saints."

Epilogue (39, 40). The whole history a looking forward; "martyrdom" and promise; realization now at hand.

The introduction has been dealt with above. In (*a*) there is a marked resemblance both in words and ideas to Philo. The series Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, corresponds with his order and selection: Noah condemning the world; the city of God; God deigning to be called the God of the patriarchs—these ideas might

be gathered independently from the Old Testament, but the coincidences even with the phraseology of Philo are remarkable. There is however no need to dwell on them. Whatever impulse Philo (or the school of quasi-philosophy which lies behind Philo) gave to our author's thought, the thought itself is his own. Philo turns all into allegory; *e.g.* the land in which Abraham sojourned is the body; the author of the Epistle is concerned with actual examples of courageous faith. The whole of this chapter is to him a chapter of living history. We now criticize that history and question facts in the sacred records. Philo's allegorizing was another mode of this criticizing tendency, but in this author's judgement not a profitable method. His own is also a critical method but different. He simply passes over the things which chiefly trouble us; *e.g.* the hiding of Moses in the bulrushes, the ten plagues. He is simple and reasonable in his selection and writes with his eye on Genesis, Exodus and the Books of Scripture, not on Philo's commentary, though he may have read it and kept what was useful to his purpose in his mind.

4. *Abel*.—With our modern theory of the composition of the Pentateuch, we may suppose that this narrative was placed at the beginning by the editor in order to illustrate the moral and spiritual character of sacrifice; a right heart rather than a punctual gift is required. That is very much what is meant here by the emphasis on Abel's faith. It is also much to the point in this chapter that Abel should have been a hero who died for his faith, and thus enables the author to illustrate his Christian view of death. It is not an end but a mysterious act of life; "through faith Abel having died

still speaketh." The later reading *λαλεῖται*, "is still spoken of," is a curious perversion of a fine thought. Our English translators must have read it in their Greek and they noticed it in their margin, but in their text they happily kept the sense they had been accustomed to in the Latin. Philo has a comment which (though it weakens the original by generalizing) is worth quoting: *ζῆ μὲν γὰρ ὁ τεθνάναι δοκῶν εἶγε καὶ ἰκέτης ὢν θεοῦ καὶ φωνῇ χρώμενος εἰρίσκεται*, "for he liveth who seemeth to be dead, if only he is found God's suppliant speaking with a suppliant's voice."

5. *Enoch*.—The Septuagint in Genesis says only that Enoch "was not found, for God translated him." Sirach, xliv. 16, like Philo, simply adds that this was an example to posterity; but xlix. 14, implies that this "translation" was more than a passing into life through death: "No man was created upon the earth such as was Enoch; for he was taken up from the earth." The Hebrew of Gen. v. 24, "and he was not, for God took him," does point to a death of peculiar blessedness, and does assert Enoch's immortality, but it does not imply immunity from the physical death of men. But there was in later times a large literature concerning Enoch which is based on a belief in such immunity, and is no doubt derived from legend far more ancient than the Jewish Torah. Here, as often, Genesis has purified ancient legend. The author of Hebrews goes as far as Sirach but no farther. He resolves the problem of the miraculous into a scriptural phrase *τοῦ μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον*, "that he should not see death," and so leaves it without closer definition. That he would not insist on the physical miracle seems the more probable from the quasi-allusion in his

own favourite Wisdom of Solomon, iv. 10 f., where the phrase ζῶν μετετέθη is applied to the good man who is taken from the evil world by a death which seems premature but is indeed the peace of immortality. Some such interpretation of the Enoch story would probably commend itself to him, though he would not interfere with the different belief of others. And for his purpose the question is not important; what he sees is that, both here and beyond, Enoch knew God and trusted His loving care for men, even though that care might not be visible to superficial observation. That is the idea of μισθαποδότης, "rewarder"; not a utilitarian philosophy of reward for goodness, but a personal faith in God who, with personal affection, responds to those who seek to come near him. It is what the Book of Job teaches, the blessedness of communion, not the justice of compensations.

7. *Noah*.—The phrase, "concerning things not seen as yet," explains the point of his example, since it refers plainly to v. 1. In the latter part of the passage the relative pronoun should be connected with the emphatic antecedent "faith," and κατέκρινεν should be understood in a general sense, not a technical; "condemned" not "damned." It may be remarked however that, except in S. Mk. xvi. 16 (the supplement to that Gospel), God is never said in the New Testament to "condemn" (κατακρίνειν); that is reserved for man's limited scope. "Became heir," in this Epistle means nearly the same as "received the promise"; it implies a future participation, and the "righteousness in accordance with faith" (κατὰ πίστιν), is no doubt the same as the righteousness which S. Paul saw "springing out of faith" (ἐκ πίστεως, Rom. ix. 30, x. 6; cf. Rom. iii. 22, iv. 11, 13, Phil. iii. 9). The

difference is that S. Paul thinks mainly of faith as a new power since Jesus Christ; this author of faith as the ancient characteristic of Israel's saints though they had been as yet debarred from its full effects.

8-12. *Abraham*.—His journey into a new country which he undertook at God's call without knowing whither God meant to lead him; his nomad life of expectation of the city of God; and even his wife Sarah's acceptance of a promise which at first sight she seemed to hear with indifference—note the *καὶ* before *Σάρρα*; in Romans it is Abraham's age, here it is Sarah's habit of mind, which is noticed as heightening the difficulty of acceptance, cf. Rom. iv. 19-21.¹ These are obviously ventures into the unseen world which faith makes real.

A few MSS. prefix *ὁ* to *καλούμενος*, "who was called" instead of "being called," as though the new name "Abraham" were the point. This might be a correction made by some student of Philo; the real point is that Abraham was "called" by God to leave his native land and "while yet the call was sounding" obeyed. In *v.* 9 a name is given to Canaan which has become a possession to after generations, *εἰς γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας*, "the land of the promise," poorly vulgarized into "the promised land." The omission of *τῆς* before *αὐτῆς* at the end of the verse is perhaps a mere slip of a high authority *N**, but it makes a fine echo to that title; "with Isaac and Jacob the fellow heirs of its (the land's own) promise."

13-16. The patriarchal stage has now been re-

¹ The addition of western MSS. and versions *στειρά, ἡ στειρά, στεριὰ οὔσα*, is a misleading exegesis. The harsh impression made by Gen. xviii. of Sarah's character is what the author feels.

viewed. It was the nomad stage and the nomad life in all after time that moulded Israel's puritan ideal,—tents not magnificence, shepherd life not the settled and more comfortable life of the Canaanitish landowner. Hence the symbolic title which the Christian inherited from the Jewish Church for its true saints; "strangers and pilgrims"; at first "in the land of Canaan" (*v.* 13, Gen. xxiii. 4), then "on this earth" (1 Chron. xxix. 15, Ps. xxxix. 12, cf. *infra*, *v.* 38). That is the main idea of this summary. It begins with a repetition of the author's peculiar phrase *κατὰ πίστιν*, which might be rendered by an equivalent "in the way of faith." It has been remarked that *πόρρωθεν ἰδόντες* gives the picture of nomads on their way to a city across the desert, who descry its towers from a distance but cannot reach it in that day's march; they greet the sight, but encamp once more afar off. The metaphor in *κομισάμενοι* (cf. 39) would by itself be like our "carrying" a harvest, but in this context it might be paraphrased by "getting home to"; in any case it implies the full enjoyment of what hitherto has been possessed without satisfaction. But even the full reception of the promises is not the final satisfaction; their fulfilment still remains, as is declared at the end of the chapter (40). The *νῦν* (16) fluctuates between a temporal and logical sense. Followed by the present tense (*ὀρέγονται*) it suddenly transforms past history into a present spectacle. "And now we behold these ancient saints reaching out towards a more august and heavenly fatherland." It would perhaps be fanciful, yet with such a fancy as befits this letter, to take it even more strictly as present, and to suppose that the writer represents them as still aspiring to a rest which the hesitation of

Christ's people still delays, cf. iv. 9. However that may be the heavenly city has ever been their true home, and the author finds a confirmation of this in the name the LORD of Israel and all the world chose for himself, "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." There is a certain resemblance to Philo in this. But Philo lays stress on "God"; whereas, he says, "Lord" and "Master" are God's names for lesser souls, to such pure hearts as these He is absolutely "God." Here the stress is on "their"; the Creator of the world, whose Being passes all understanding, has deigned to use this surname of affection, to be known as our fathers' God. It is like our Lord's "When ye pray, say, Our Father"; and no doubt the inference He drew from the ancient name to the continued life of the patriarchs is not far from the author's mind—that would make for the stricter present sense of *νῦν δὲ ὀρέγονται*, "even now they are seeking."

(b) 17-31.—*Abraham* links this with the former section. The *Sacrifice of Isaac* marks a new stage in his career. His journey and sojourning gave Israel their pilgrim ideal; the sacrifice gave them their consecration. For the sacrifice is contemplated here as completed. The modern thought of a cruel and heathenish act of superstition mercifully averted, of Abraham's "temptation" being his divine guidance into a better understanding of God's true will, does not appear in this passage. Rather the thought is "by faith Abraham though long and sorely tried, issued from his trial as a priest who has offered his only son to God; the sacrifice is completed and its effect has power on the whole life of God's Church ever since." The perfect "hath offered," has its proper force; the trial was not the temptation to do what later ages would abhor

but the proving trial so hard for father, patriarch, and receiver of national promises, to endure.

The faith by which he prevailed was that faith in the unseen world which overleaps the mystery of death; in what way God could "raise from the dead ones" is not defined; the faith is the same as that which animates Job and the Psalmists when they reach through Israel's mythology and their own fainting spirits to the ground of their hearts. And so, continues the Epistle, he did get him back from the very house of death (*ὄθεν = ἐκ νεκρῶν*), even in the moment and act of perilling all (*καὶ ἐν παραβολῇ*), for this interpretation of the sixteenth century is attractive and it would seem, from what a scholiast on Thucydides says, possible. It gives proper emphasis to the *καὶ*, and points an antithesis with *ἐκομίσατο*. If however *παραβολῇ* be taken in its common sense, as in ix. 9, the meaning will be "and he did get him back from the dead in such a way as to make the episode a parable of instruction as well as a manifestation of faith and the answer to faith."

20, 21. *Isaac* and *Jacob* looked into the future by their faith, giving their blessings in an unexpected because divinely guided manner. Again the author reads his Old Testament simply and does not allow the crookedness of the human means by which the blessing of Isaac was turned from Esau to Jacob, to obscure the larger issues or the depth of the patriarch's words. He had met such objections to the imperfection of the medium in the first lines of his letter; our theory of "progressive revelation" was familiar and natural to his mind. The divine character of these acts of blessing is emphasized by the quotation from Genesis of Jacob's

worshipping, which was like our Lord looking up to heaven when he blessed the bread. The Septuagint had adopted a pointing of the Hebrew word which gave it the meaning "staff" instead of that preferred by the scholars who afterwards fixed the Hebrew text, but it makes no real difference to the sense here. If staves ever bore idolatrous images neither the Septuagint translators nor the writer of this Epistle were thinking of such antiquarian matters. We are apt to wonder why the great blessing of "Israel" by Jacob in Gen. xlix., with its outlook on "the last days," is not rather selected. Does the author feel with the modern critic that this piece, though so ancient, must be "national" rather than personal? Or does he more simply keep to the spirit of Genesis as a whole by selecting passages which shew the fathers looking forward but one stage at a time, while the elect family is gradually separated from its lesser branches?

22. *Joseph* ends Genesis and introduces the exodus, realizing his hope by faith. The word used for his dying is of course common in that sense in Greek, but it has a special appropriateness for this man of affairs (cf. xiii. 7) whose "end" inaugurated a new stirring of his people to life.

23-29. *Moses*.—Here the courage of faith is very plainly represented. Both of Moses himself and of his parents it is particularly noticed that they "did not fear" (vv. 23, 27). It may be questioned whether Moses' fearlessness in leaving Egypt (27) refers to his exodus with the people (so that v. 27 would be a general anticipation of what is treated in detail in 28, 29), or to his departure for Midian after killing the Egyptian. The former was

an ancient interpretation, for some "Western" documents insert the killing of the Egyptian as another example of faith, not here, but after *v.* 23. And this gets rid of a verbal difficulty—that in Genesis it is said that Moses was afraid when he found his act was known. But such an artificial objection would have had little weight with this author, and the fine phrase which follows, "he endured as seeing the invisible one" seems inspired by the narrative of the Burning Bush. This arrangement too of Moses' life, corresponding pretty closely with S. Stephen's in Acts vii., has a significant consistency. After the mention of his parent's example of courageous faith, his own career is divided into three parts; (i.) 24–26, his secular education in Egypt, (ii.) 27, his deeper education by converse with God in the wilderness where old mythology and purified faith alike taught Israel to believe that communion with God was most sure to be attained, (iii.) 28–29, his actual work of "redemption." It may be wondered why nothing is said here about the giving of the Law. That will be handled in ch. xii.; yet even there the treatment is by way of contrast with the heavenly voice of later revelation, and in this Epistle of reformation Sinai would not be conveniently included in the heroisms of faith. Indeed that term carries with it a sufficient answer. The abandonment of the pomp of Egypt, the sojourn in the wilderness, the institution of the Passover in the face of hostile Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea—these are heroisms of faith; the giving of the Law had another kind of excellence. Notice in passing the perfect *πεποίηκεν* (28) standing alone among so many aorists; it implies "he has left us the institution of the Passover," and may be taken for what

it is worth (among other considerations) as pointing to the Jewish upbringing of the author and his friends.

A remarkable expression is that in *v.* 26, "considering the reproach of the Christ (τὸν ὀνειδισμόν τοῦ χριστοῦ) greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt." But the difficulty disappears when we remember what has already been noticed often in the Epistle, that "the Christ" is the title used in the Old Testament for the Christ-bearing people of Israel itself. Here the very words are closely reminiscent of Ps. lxxxix. (lxxxviii.) 51, where "thy Christ" seems to mean the people. Of course it is no common title for a people to bear. Of old it implied a God-inspired community, such as S. Stephen describes in Acts vii. 38, "in the church in the wilderness with the angel that spoke (or 'the angel of him who spoke') in mount Sinai," and in the retrospection of the writer and readers of this Epistle it suffused the whole past history with the person of Him whom they knew as Jesus their Lord.

30. The *taking of Jericho* is another example of the author's modest treatment of "miracle." The act was God's, the means faith, the rest he leaves undefined.

31. Faith is extended (as in Jam. ii. 5) beyond the chosen people; true faith like true priesthood, and true sonship (cf. xii. 8) is natural and universal. This is in accordance with the Old Testament as a whole, though it conflicts with some parts of it.

(c.) 32-38. The later history especially that of the Maccabean period.

The judges, the beginning of the monarchy, and the course of prophecy are rapidly touched (32-33). Part of *v.* 33 might be referred to the Books of the Kings (which in the author's Bible were continuous

with Samuel). "Stopping the mouths of lions," "quenching fire," is from Daniel, but cf. also 1 Macc. ii. 59, 60; it would be interesting to know how far he connected the Book of Daniel with the Maccabees; he certainly passes at once from this point to the Maccabees. For that period he uses not only 1 Maccabees, but also 2 Maccabees with its praise of martyrdom and its confession of faith in the resurrection. The important passage is 2 Macc. vi. and vii. where not only the incidents, but most of the remarkable words here used will be found; it also supplies a parallel to *v.* 3 *supra*, and to the praise of chastisement in xii. 7 ff. The word ἐπίσθησαν, "sawn asunder," in *v.* 37 is sometimes referred to the martyrdom of Isaiah as it is recorded in an apocryphal book, but this is uncertain; the horrible mode of execution seems to have been commonly practised (cf. 2 Sam. xii. 31, Amos i. 3 LXX); following ἐπειράσθησαν as it does, it may be used quite generally, and there is some confusion in the text which forbids too definite an inference from the words. The sudden introduction of Isaiah would be peculiar. So in *v.* 35 (where the grammatical slip γυναικας for γυναῖκες need not be noticed except as a possible parallel to ix. 1—a preservation in the ancient MSS. of an actual carelessness in the original letter) the reference may possibly be to the raising from the dead of the sons of the widow at Sarepta (1 K. xvii. 17 ff.) and the woman of Shunem (2 K. iv. 17 ff.), but it is more likely that the whole section is predominantly Maccabean and that the faith of the mother of the seven martyrs is quoted, who spoke so nobly of the mystery of life to her youngest son and bade him

(2 Macc. vii. 29) fear not the tyrant but die worthily of his brothers "so that in the divine mercy I may receive thee with thy brothers" (*ἵνα ἐν τῷ ἐλέει σὺν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς σου κομίσωμαι σε*). This gives a fuller sense to "by resurrection," which may as well be explained by, as contrasted with "better resurrection" in 35; and though the tense of "received" may cause difficulty to us with our formal eschatology of Paradise, Judgement, etc., there is no reason to suppose that the author of this Epistle, much less the Jewish mother, would have felt that difficulty.

Westcott and Hort's arrangement of *v.* 38 gives an antithesis which the author might well have enjoyed, and seems almost necessary to bind together the rhythm of the whole clause—"those of whom the world was not worthy wandering in wildernesses, etc."

It is perhaps not too fanciful to point out that whereas each of the former divisions of this historical review come to rest, as it were, on the stable words "city," "peace," this third division passes away in "wanderings." Thus it prepares naturally for the Epilogue (39, 40) in which the waiting and expectant character of the ancient faith is reasserted.

Epilogue 39, 40. All these heroes of the old world had witness borne to them through their faith. In one case, Abel's, this witness was pre-eminent. Genesis implies (*ἔπιδεν ὁ θεός*) that God himself was the witness.¹ In all a witness has been put upon record in the sacred books; we might paraphrase "they were

¹ The Oxyrhynchus papyrus now confirms the reading *ἀντῶ* in xi. 4 hitherto preserved only in Clement's quotation, "God bearing witness to him over the gifts." It seems possible that *αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ* might be defended (on intrinsic evidence) as "God himself" (bearing witness).

canonized"; but they did not carry the harvest of the promise. God who has fitted the successive ages together in His foresight (cf. xi. 3) reserved that consummation for the Gospel days when the perfecting of His whole family was destined. The question occurs whether the author considered that the perfecting of the ancient saints was already accomplished when he wrote this letter. From xii. 23 it might appear that he did. But since that refers to the City of God "in heaven" and since his Alexandrine thought rested on an ideal perfection "there" which was from the beginning and had to be realized in human experience, it is not safe to press this; and yet though the Epistle makes as it were excursions into that ideal home, its outlook is in general very closely concentrated on a particular earthly scene in which the author and the friends to whom he writes are shut up for the doing of a particular duty—

"The world is wide
For you I say—for me a narrow space
Betwixt the four walls of a fighting place."

But again he shews that narrow duty to himself and them as the issue of all the ages that had passed, and also as itself efficient of far larger things. On the whole it seems most consonant with the tenor of the whole Epistle, and especially of the passage which immediately follows, to take "apart from us" in the strictest sense, as applying to the little group for whom this letter came into being, and to interpret the sentence as meaning that the satisfaction of these expectant heroes depends, for its hastening or delay, on the conduct of the readers of the Epistle.

XII. And this expectancy of the ancient saints explains the passage from the passive *μαρτυρηθέντες* to the active *μαρτύρων* in xii. 1. Their faith had been witnessed to by the sacred historians for the encouragement of those who came after them. Now they are to witness to the faithfulness of their descendants, on their report of which to God the consummation of the promises shall be endorsed. With this word, as in so many other respects, the Epistle holds a middle place in the New Testament. In the Gospels *μάρτυς* is hardly used and only in a general sense except in Lk. xxiv. 48, though in the fourth Gospel the verb *μαρτυρέω* is very frequent. S. Paul does not develop the sense of it, unless 1 Tim. vi. 13 be allowed him, where the verb is used in a manner significant for later thought of our Lord "witnessing the good profession" before Pilate. At the beginning of Acts the Apostles are described as witnesses of the resurrection, cf. Lk. xxiv. 48, but in xxii. 20 S. Stephen is styled the witness of the Lord. This comes near to the usage of the Apocalypse, where *μάρτυς* has all but taken its technical sense, as in later times, of one who lays down life for the faith. In the Apocalypse this is aided by the corresponding use of *μαρτυρία*—the witness of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy (xix. 10) means something more than that the prophets speak or think of Jesus. In this Epistle *μάρτυς* is derived from *μαρτυρέισθαι*, and here too ch. xi. shews that courage and suffering are implied in the idea, but the Epistle is one stage further from modern usage than the Apocalypse is.¹

¹ The *Kontakion* in the *Horologion* of the Greek Church calls the Maccabean heroes, *πρὸς Μαρτύρων μέγιστοι Μάρτυρες*.

The exhortation really ends with this chapter, though it is taken up again in xiii. where it is concentrated into one final appeal and fortified by prayer.

This is the plan of xii.

A. 1-13. Strive and endure.

(a) 1-3, Picture from arena; regard directed to Jesus who endured and is now visible in glory.

(b) 4-13, The philosophy of chastisement.

B. 14-29. The end is near.

(a) 14-17, The responsibility of privilege in general,

(b) 18-24, and in particular in the state of salvation;

(c) 25-27, which includes expectancy of a heavenly change,

(d) 28-29, *i.e.* the coming of the kingdom in permanence with fire.

A. (a) 1-3. "Not without us," continues the letter, "could they be perfected. It follows then by the cogent logic of affection and honour that we must carry on the tradition of loyal faith. We stand as athletes in the arena. Those heroes, witnessed to of old look down on us to be witnesses in their turn of our faithfulness. Let them not be disappointed, but casting off the wraps in which we wait the signal to start let us run the race with enduring courage. And see! Jesus our Lord who ran a like course before us is there visible in glory at the end of the race-course. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Him, and (dropping metaphor) consider what a real encouragement His endurance of harsh treatment provides."

This is the second of the three picture scenes in the Epistle, cf. vi. 19 f., and xiii. 10 ff. It is an advance on the first in that it shews the Lord within sight—notice that ἐκάθισεν has here become κεκάθικεν, perfect tense, which not only suggests the present relationship of the session to the course of events, but also marks a completed stage in the argument. But it still falls short of xiii. 10 ff., inasmuch as there actual contact with Him is contemplated. The picture is of an athletic contest, of a stadium, cf. 1 Cor. ix. 24 and 2 Tim. iv. 8—the whole passage is influenced by Pauline language. The heroes of the Old Testament are more than spectators—there is no room in this serious contest for mere entertainment or display, they are witnesses who must make report of the proceedings. They are described as surrounding the place like a cloud, a common metaphor but used here with studied accuracy of these “Spirits” from behind the veil. The author associates himself with his friends so long as his picture-language continues, and urges them to cast away the sin, *i.e.* the vain glorious fallacy (cf. ἀπάτη, iii. 13) which hinders their allegiance to the unpopular cause of Christ. He compares it to the wrap in which the athletes stand waiting (with that expectant nervousness which every athlete knows) the signal to start. The meaning “celebrated” or “specious” for εὐπερίστατον would suit the character of the “sin”; it is perhaps impossible to decide upon a certain rendering of this rare word, but the A.V., “that doth so easily beset us”—an amplification of the Vulgate *circumstans*—better fits the metaphor which we have imagined. The influence of the Vulgate is also seen in the (original text of) A.V., “let us run with patience *unto* the race,” *curramus ad*

propositum nobis certamen, but this addition is not in the original Vulgate, and spoils the sense; for the present *τρέχωμεν* agrees with *δι' ὑπομονῆς* and implies that more than a good start is needed (cf. x. 36, xii. 28), there must be enduring perseverance. In that perseverance however there will be the continual encouragement of Jesus the Lord; He is the finisher as well as the source, leader, captain of loyal faith¹—*ἀρχηγόν* here as in ii. 10 is a "romantic" title which sounds an echo of soldiership as well as its plain sense of "beginner." The verb *τρέχωμεν* might be used of any kind of contest, but even so it would be metaphorical and it is simplest to suppose one metaphor or picture consistently carried out. There is a race-course, with the cloud of witnesses hanging over it on both sides throughout its length; Jesus himself has run the same course with like pain and the imminent prospect of like victory—so imminent that it gave a "joy of battle" even to His suffering; and now He sits at the goal in divine glory, the mark (cf. Phil. iii. 14) to whom the gaze of the runners must be constantly directed. Then suddenly the author drops his imagery, speaks directly *to* his friends, and bids them compare facts with facts, the Lord's endurance in the days of His flesh with the present trial which all but causes their spirits to flag. And it is remarkable, yet natural if high-minded men are being directed to such a one as Jesus Christ, that physical suffering is omitted—though there is a grim reminder in the next verse that the bravest men should not presume to count on facing physical suffering unmoved—and the pain of words, of misrepre-

¹ "He who trod the path of faith before us and trod it perfectly to the end," from *Foundations*, p. 192, brings out another aspect of the meaning well.

sentation, of intellectual honour assaulted, is specially considered. This is one of the most notable passages for confirming that view of the Epistle which connects it with the Jewish appeal to patriots and the national scorn of those who hang back. And the true text of the quotation made from Num. xvi. 38 (Hebrew notation, for either the words are a loose reminiscence of the sense of the LXX, or they come directly from the Hebrew) suggests a deep and truly Christian answer to this feeling, which may be compared with the Lord's words on Calvary, Lk. xxiii. 34. These harsh upbraiders are to be forgiven in charity (cf. 14, *infra*); they sin against themselves and know not what they do.

(*b*) 4-13. There follows, introduced by the warning just referred to, a kind of philosophy of suffering considered as chastisement, and as therefore evidence of filial relationship to God the Father of Spirits. It is arranged as a little sermon on a text from Proverbs. Philo has something like it, but it seems to be naturally suggested by the passage in 2 Maccabees which ch. xi. so largely rests upon—for in that passage the philosophy of suffering is treated in a very like manner. Notice the vivid feeling of an unseen world in which what we call abstractions have substantive existence, shewn in the quoting of "the consolation" as a person who speaks; "L'héroïsme," says V. Hugo, "dans la region immaterielle, a un contour." So this voice from the spiritual world declares the spiritual issue of chastisement. It springs from the filial relationship of men to God; and the life of families in this world is its sacrament. Its end is the participation of the sons in the deeper life of the father which mere physical relationship cannot give; and

this life as fully realized in the divine is holiness, which is the complement of consecration (cf. 10 with 14, *ἀγιότης* with *ἀγιασμόν*), and may be recognized in the rough ways of this world as righteousness with peace (11). This seems a fair statement of the logical connexion, but the text itself is somewhat confused in the Greek, and may perhaps be another instance of epistolary carelessness in a practised writer.

It will be felt that merely disciplinary value is not enough to make a true philosophy of suffering, and it might be enough to answer that the author only goes so far as is necessary for his immediate purpose of encouraging his friends. This is in fact one of the passages where a certain academic coldness is all but to be acknowledged. Yet not so, after all. As in vi. 10 f. the cold self-centred view of grace is corrected by an appeal to zealous charity, so here the tone is heightened first by the thought that as suffering is universal, so is the capacity for divine sonship in all mankind (8); secondly by the appeal (12, 13) to strengthen the weak-hearted and make the paths straight; thus the loyalty of the readers may become a bracing example to their brethren in the faith—for this seems the largest and therefore the most likely sense of the abstract neuter τὸ χωλὸν in v. 13, cf. 15.

B. (a) 14–17. This section is closely connected with the last; *εἰρήνην, πάντων, ἀγιασμόν* are suggested by πάντες (8) ἀγιότητος (10) εἰρηνικόν (11) but this is the artificial interweaving manner of the Epistle; the junctures are concealed. And the phrase which comes almost at once, “apart from which no man shall see the Lord,” points forward to the great concluding subject

of the chapter; the nearness of the end, in fact the *Parousia* of Christ; an article of the Church's faith which is not the less firmly held by this author because he has a particular interpretation to offer of it, which may seem new though it goes back to the suggestion of the Lord himself. It is that the troubles of these times are the "pangs of the coming age," and that even at once the Lord Christ shall be seen (14), and the Kingdom, to which His people have already drawn near (22 f.), shall come in deed and life (28 f.).

He begins with words which have an Old Testament ring but also in their context recall S. Paul (cf. Rom. xii. 18), "Seek peace with all, yet not so as to betray the special consecration which is the privilege of the Christian Church." We discuss to-day what this consecration means; is it institutional, the fact of membership; or is it moral, the character of life? Such discussion would not have occurred to the author and his friends. The moral value of faith was pre-supposed by them; the ordinary "sins" such as S. Paul had so often to write about are not suspected in them. There is a hint of too much anxiety about money, but that would be a concomitant of the one temptation which is assailing them, *i.e.* to be faithless to their profession, their brotherhood, their Master. These men are akin to those perplexed believers of all ages whose struggle for clear knowledge of faith and duty is so intense that it makes them immune from common temptations. And to them their friend declares, with a severity of which he has already shewn himself capable, that it is true what the bigots say; outside the consecrated family "salvation" is not, for salvation means at that time,

and for the men they know, seeing—the recognition of and by—the Lord Jesus when He “comes.”

Nor is this a private matter. Their faithfulness or unfaithfulness will affect the mass of believers. Even the alienation of sincere hearts on conscientious grounds from the divine source of strength, will be like a weed choking the garden by its swift, rank growth, and there is also the possibility of self-deception. A certain anxiety about worldly gear seems to be glanced at here and there in the letter, and now their friend warns these scholars in their sheltered lives that what they think disinterested patriotism may prove but a mercenary bargain. In his quotation from the Septuagint of Dt. xxix. 18 the writer either follows an unusual reading $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\chi\lambda\eta\grave{\eta}$ for $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \chi\omicron\lambda\eta\grave{\eta}$ (“hinder” or “choke” for “in gall”), or else his $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\chi\lambda\eta\grave{\eta}$ is not part of the quotation at all, but merely an apt verb for his own sentence which has got into our MSS. of the LXX from a scribe’s reminiscence of this passage. This however is not a problem of general interest. What most readers to-day would wish to decide is whether the author denies in certain cases the possibility of repentance; “he found no place for repentance, though he had sought it with tears.” It must first be noticed that there is an ambiguity in the actual words. “It” (the feminine pronoun in the Greek) might refer either to “the blessing” or to “repentance.” “Repentance” stands nearest in the sentence and seems most naturally to be meant; and however that may be, the hopelessness of Esau’s case is the point, and so far as Esau is concerned, it would be difficult to extenuate the harshness of the judgement. But the special character of the reference—to Esau—

makes all the difference. His blessing and his repentance were not bound up with the Christian doctrine of salvation, and though his case may well be cited as a warning, there is no reason for pressing an exact correspondence in all the details. The other passages in this Epistle in which a like harsh doctrine seems to be involved do shew that the author considered the choice of action offered in the present crisis to his friends to be fraught with immeasurable consequences, but neither there nor here is he adding a dogma to the scheme of salvation. "Choose rightly," he says, "while this particular choice is open; it will presently be too late." The phrase "place of repentance" is used in the Apocalypse of Baruch, lxxxv. 12, and the sense is also found in the Ezra Apocalypse, vii. 102-115. There is so much in the Epistle which seems akin to these books that the question might arise whether the severity of their doctrine should not affect our judgement of the meaning of the Epistle. But if so, it would really confirm what has just been said. For neither Ezra nor Baruch limit the opportunity for repentance in this life; what these books insist on is that no intercession by man for man will be accepted in the Day of Judgement. Mr. Box thinks that the Ezra-apocalyptist "is aiming at some counter-doctrine of intercession for the dead," and that "we may detect the influence of Alexandrine theology which tended to lay all stress upon the present life as determining the eternal fate of every man" (*Ezra-Apoc.* p. 154); compare ix. 27, *supra*, and notice that this would not affect our discussion of xi. 40, since there is no doubt there of God's final purpose of perfecting the heroes of faith.

B. (b) 18-24. The general responsibility of privilege, illustrated by the case of Esau, is here pressed home upon the readers. Israel with the divine Law had much; they with their heavenly Jerusalem made new by the triumph of the Lord Jesus, have far more both to enjoy and to lose.

The contrast is eloquently drawn between the terrors of Sinai and the joy of the heavenly Sion. In the first part the language is strongly coloured by reminiscences of Ex. xix. and Dt. iv. The passages are impressive. In Deuteronomy especially is the privilege of Israel insisted on. They alone of all the nations upon earth have heard God speaking to them out of the fire and lived; they alone have been so loved by Him. But Deuteronomy is severe as well as tender, and the author is right in laying stress on the harsher and sadder aspects of that revelation; the terrors which accompanied it, the people deprecating further communication, and the unfaithfulness which was prefigured by that deprecation.

The vividness of the description is mainly due to the author's skilful selection and juxtaposition of words from the Septuagint. Dr. Selwyn (*JTS*, Oct. 1910) thinks that "mountain" must be supplied with the participles in *v.* 18, and that "a mountain seared and burned with fire" is the author's reference to the volcanic mountains which still mark the scene, and which he had himself visited. But this is doubtful, and the vague phrase—vague in logic and vague perhaps in grammar—*ψηλαφωμένῳ καὶ κεκαυμένῳ πυρί*—serves excellently to point the contrast between the spiritual and living glory of Sion, and the material tempest of Sinai; our R.V. margin well follows the Latin with its "palpable and

kindled fire." Such elemental powers have in ch. i. been called "angels," but it is easy to contemplate the angels with earth-bound eyes, and this suggestion of "mere matter" is fitly followed by the record (v. 19) of Israel's deprecation of the divine word. In v. 23 the nature powers appear again, but now (as in the Apocalypse) in their true aspect of "angels in festal assembly." So it seems best to punctuate. Even the partial weakness of the author's rhythm demands it; the corresponding fragments of iambic lines, *μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων πανηγύρει—ἀπογεγραμμένων ἐν οὐρανοῖς*, are quite according to his wont. Here the Latin is very splendid, *multorum milium angelorum frequentiae*; cf. the Roman Preface for Feasts of Apostles, "*cumque omni militia caelestis exercitus.*"

It is difficult to say precisely what is meant by "the church of the first-born enrolled in heaven," and "the spirits of just men made perfect." But "church," *ἐκκλησία*, is no part of this Epistle's terminology for the Christian life, and here as in the first eight chapters of Acts, the word probably refers, as a title, to the Old Testament Church or to the founders of that Church, the patriarchs who in Genesis lived in ideal simplicity and closeness of communion with God. Thus the author would give largeness and spirituality to the late Jewish dogma that certain select persons enjoyed a special immortality. Then if we take "spirits of just men perfected" to mean the servants of Jesus Christ who have died in the faith, we escape the difficulty noticed at xi. 40, and we are able to divide this description of the heavenly Jerusalem into two parts; the first including the elect of the old world, and ending with the thought

of "God judge of *all*," the second consecrated to the "world that was to come," and grouped round Jesus, "mediator of a covenant that is freshly new."

For the change from *καινῆς* to *νέας* in *v.* 24 seems designed to express an idea which has never been quite lost sight of; cf. the Rabbinic, "God is always young to the world," and Watts' line (in its original form), "When I survey the wondrous cross, where the young Prince of glory died." The Blood of sprinkling is a Levitical figure for the life of the Lord Jesus, set free by death, and effectual for cleansing in the heavenly sanctuary—a stronger (*κρείττον*) force than Abel's unconscious appeal for vengeance in the blind, earthly sphere.

B. (c) 25-27. That thought, half concealed in the terse reference to Abel, is developed in this clause. A heavenly change is about to take place. In "heaven" it has just been shewn completed. But in the sacramental style of the Epistle that which is completed in heaven is contemplated as it is worked out on earth, where human logic arranges even the heavenly life in terms of progress. As once in the days of Haggai when the second Temple was in building, and Israel's hidden life with God began anew; so now, when a later temple is threatened the divine voice heard then is heard again. It announces that a more essentially divine operation than even the giving of the Law is taking place. The complications of politics in which the people of God have found themselves more and more involved do but draw them more and more into the reality of holiness. At the Captivity, at the Restoration, at the fresh embarrassments and disappointments which followed the Restoration, and now at this latest point most of all, there is divine Spirit

involved in the outward signs; heaven as well as earth is being shaken; a new era is beginning, not only in secular history, but in those spiritual relationships of men with God which secular history symbolizes, partly hindering them, while it gives them a "place wherein they may go on"; and the way of simple duty is cleared by the commanding voice of God. The political confusion is the means of grace. The way to use those means is the narrow way now offered for choice; it leads out of the confusion, and he who takes it escapes the tottering manufactures (*ὡς πεποιημένων*, 27) of man's artificial society or religious use, and finds the abiding simplicity of the incoming Kingdom of God.

(*d*) 28, 29. For at this point, remarkably and startlingly, the sacerdotal imagery of the Epistle mingles with that other imagery which the apostolic Church took over from prophets, apocalyptists, and late Jewish popular religion—the imagery of the Kingdom. That Kingdom is now coming in permanence. Or does the author rather imply it has always been here—permanent and unshakeable amid all the passing variations of merely tangible progress—like Christ beneath the perishable veil of nature (i. 10–12); but now a step in its realization is made possible? It is possible, and its effectiveness depends on his friends' present choice—whether they will with thankful hearts receive it, "take it over."

The transition of imagery is remarkable, but the "Priest-King" Melchizedek has prepared for it, and even here, with *λατρεύωμεν*—"ritual service well pleasing, reverent and awful"—the priestly analogy returns.

And then the section closes with a quotation from Dt. iv. 24. It follows *λατρεύωμεν* fitly, for in Deuteronomy

this fiery zeal or jealousy of God is held out as a reason for pure worship. But so much more than that is implied. Indeed this is a place where the difficulty of analysing this author's meaning is felt conspicuously. Like Virgil and the other conscious artists in words he sets a train of analogies and inferences at work; he is distinct yet surrounds himself with an atmosphere of thought and reminiscence—a *νέφος μαρτύρων*. So here the consuming fire (which is God) completes that separation of the artificial from the eternal which has been inaugurated in the "shaking" of the former verses. It is again a vivid image which finds its vigour in the fierce menace of the present troubled times. And besides that it stands in a peculiar relationship to what has been said about Sinai and the giving of the Law. It is certainly strange that the author should insist on the material, earthly, character of that great event. This suits the lines of the Epistle, but the question forces itself upon us; Is there not something arbitrary in this judgement? Was not Sinai as truly sacramental as the second Temple or this later war with Rome? The answer must be that there is something arbitrary; that this Epistle is a work of conscious art and its selection, arrangement, interpretation, are therefore in some degree a degeneration from such pure art as we find in the Synoptic Gospels; it implies to some degree the artificial. But the author is conscious of the peril and in the present instance he meets it allusively by this quotation from Deuteronomy. For Deuteronomy is itself a book of conscious art. It selects from the earlier Law, arranges, interprets, separates the essential, and shews that aspect of the Lawgiving which is indeed sacramental. So to the understanding readers

these last verses had an inner voice. The firm kingdom does go back even to the times of Joshua and Moses. The thankful heart demanded is the heart of Joshua, Moses, David, as contrasted with the heart of earth-bound Israel. The consuming fire divine is the reality which Israel did not perceive in the fires of Sinai, but which has ever been consuming the unreal from out of the living world of God. In the present crisis a particular and therefore real coming of Christ is recognized in the Epistle. This is a reasonable recognition just because this particular coming is eternal and has been developing throughout the history of Israel from the beginning. Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and this Epistle are chapters in one Book which is always engaged in "taking the precious from the vile" and discovering eternal spirit through the veil of sense.

XIII. A conclusion, treating of—

- (a) 1-6 Certain duties;
- (b) 7-17 discipline and the narrow road of the Gospel which discipline keeps open and rejoices in;
- (c) 18-23 personal ties of affection bound up in a Collect with the whole doctrine of the Epistle;
- (d) 24-25 greetings and the Pauline "grace."
- (a) 1-6. Certain points of conduct are briefly touched such as the circumstances, or the character of the readers, or perhaps some former letter from them has suggested.

1-3. Love of the brethren, or as we might say, the spirit of churchmanship, apt, as the whole letter shews, to be forgotten by those to whom it was sent. This

involves hospitality, the sacramental beauty of which is half playfully indicated by the allusion to Abraham and Lot entertaining angels unawares—the austere philosophy of angel-lore is here laid aside. It also involves goodness to prisoners, as it had done in an earlier crisis (x. 32–34), and other hardly used persons. The sanction for this precept might be explained from 2 Cor. xii. 2—“Be kind in these troubles of this world, and do not let your philosophy cheat you into thinking you are rapt away from their sphere”; but it is more simple to explain “in body” as the unpremeditated phrase of a Platonist whose thought ran oftener on, “the life of the world to come,” than on, “the resurrection of the body.” He is a Paulinist too, but did not feel obliged to use “flesh,” “body,” “spirit,” just like his master.

4. In this precept about marriage there may be a direct reference to S. Paul who had advised against marriage (1 Cor. vii. 26) “because of the pressing necessity” of his times. It is possible that one of the author’s friends had asked about that advice of the Apostle, having regard to the pressing necessity of these later times. The second half of the verse also finds a parallel in the same passage of S. Paul (1 Cor. vi. 13 ff., where notice the use of “body”). But it has its own turn, characteristic of the Epistle. It concentrates attention on this little group of friends and their duties—“as for those who offend God will judge their cases; no business of yours or mine.”

5–6. Generosity about worldly goods, and risking them—a subject already touched on and perhaps a sore one with the readers. If so their friend softens while he strengthens his appeal by his beautiful quotations from

Deuteronomy and the Psalm, and by the cheerfulness he sheds upon it all with his one choice participle *θαρρῶντας*, "with good courage."

(*b*) 7-17. Brotherly love and brotherly duties lead to this memorial of certain officers of the Brotherhood. The difficulty of being generous and "detached" suggests the picture of their simple but much occupied lives. Who they were, how they died, whether they were in Holy Orders (as is probable) or just "leaders" who came to the front in time of need, we cannot tell. Particular persons not types of a class appear to be meant, and their faithful laborious example is well represented in the happy phrase, "Contemplating again and again their exit from the unresting activity of business, imitate their other-worldly faith"; only the Greek manages this in a harmonious cadence of nine words.

8-16. The leaders pass from the visible scene, but the Captain abides, Jesus who is Christ. The name and title, Jesus Christ, is the simple creed of the primitive Brotherhood. It is here taken up and applied in a special manner. "To-day" recalls the argument from Ps. xcv. (ch. iii. and iv.) and that leads the mind back to the doctrine drawn from Ps. cii. in i. 10 ff.; thence it moves again through the whole Epistle with its recognition of the Christ in ancient history (i. 5 ff., iii. 6, etc.) of the divine kinship and destiny of men (ch. ii.), of its fulfilment in the Lord Jesus (iv. 14 f.), and of the author's conviction that this revelation in a Son whose sonship is full inheritance and all embracing priesthood (i. 2), is a complete and ever satisfying revelation—"yesterday and to-day the same, yea and for the ages." The phrase also meets the anxiety of the present crisis—"to-day," and

calms it. Nor is it without consolation for those who fear that this "reformation" (ix. 10), and especially the abrupt severance of ancestral ties which the letter urges, may make a real severance between "Christianity and Judaism." The Christ is still the Christ of the Old Testament and Israel; Jesus is still Jesus of Nazareth who "in the days of His flesh" lived, believed, worshipped, and died, a Jew. And notice the ancient Hebrew ring. It is an exclamation not a sentence, a rallying cry not a formal creed. As in the Hebrew of Dt. vi. 4, so in the Greek here, there is no verb.

9. "The same," passes naturally to its contrast, "divers and strange." These diverse and strange doctrines have been cited to prove that the letter was written during a late reaction to Jewish practices, for which reaction there is some evidence. Taken by itself the passage does suggest this. But it is the whole tenor of the Epistle which commends the earlier date, and there is no difficulty in imagining that there were earlier instances of such reaction—indeed Galatians, not to add Colossians, proves it. And even if that be not imagined, the national leanings of the readers might be enough to account for the warning. To a Paulinist, an Alexandrine, and a reformer, who finds his fathers' faith in the Book of the Law and not in the later Temple, a good half of the Jewish system of his own day might seem "divers and strange doctrines." And it must be remembered that many even within the Jewish Church would agree with him at that time.

10-16. In any case the warning is dropped as it were in passing, and it forms an apparently logical introduction to the assertion which follows of the one

altar. Apparently; for no doubt there was a serious reason for inserting it, and throughout the following section there is a good deal of artistic, if not of artificial, logic. The analogy from the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement does not and is not intended to fit the sacrament of Calvary exactly. It is not a ritual type which fixes, as by authority, the sequence and interpretation of the Crucifixion. It simply gives a point of view from which that event may be vividly imagined. Nor is the *διό*, "therefore," a strictly logical, but only an analogical conjunction. The main thing is the sacramental picture—the third of the great pictures of the Epistle, cf. vi. 19 f., xii. 1 f.—of the Crucifixion. To the outward eye that criminal execution, outside the Holy City, on the shameful hill, was like—not an ancient sacrifice, but the offscouring of a sacrifice. In reality it was the moment when the Son of God entered the heavenly sanctuary in His richer life, made atonement for His people—and the noun with its article, *τὸν λαόν*, seems to include those sinners against themselves who had brought this terrible sacrament into being—and henceforth will be not merely seen in the distance as in xii. 2, but in closest touch with those who will share this sacrament, and find the holiness which is His through the visible shame which is also His.

For *τοίνυν*, "therefore" (*v.* 13), is used in its strictly logical sense. The reality of a sacrament is proved by its capability of being shared. "Therefore," says the author, "the practical application must be made." His first person plural probably narrows the appeal to the little circle whom he is addressing. Probably; for he addresses them certainly in *v.* 17, and prays for them

in *v.* 21. They are to meet their Lord outside the hallowed limits of national relationship. They are to lose seeming honour as He lost His. But though the mystical Pauline phrase, "in Christ," is not employed, the same close communion is really meant by the "unto Him" and "through Him," *πρὸς αὐτόν, δι' αὐτοῦ*, which describes their future life in more pictorial language. This will be their compensation, full gain for seeming loss, and a fellowship of visible brotherhood which rests on deeper foundations of charity and hope than that which they hesitate to part from. Outside the camp, the transitory ordinance of Israel's polity, they will enter the city with foundations (*xi.* 10), the country of their fathers (*xi.* 14), the ideal polity of Israel in which all nations of the earth were destined to be gathered to God (*v.* 14). It is difficult for one who has read the whole Epistle, it must have been impossible for the original readers, to think of "the city that is to be" and doubt that S. Paul's hope for final union with that brotherhood of Israel which was being renounced, would in that city be knit up again and perfected.

That these few friends of his should desert the militant nation, leave Jerusalem to fall, and "go out" to the Lord Jesus "as seeing Him who is invisible," was the immediate application which the author made of his sacramental doctrine. But that little movement quickly grows larger, as he meditates upon it. From this crisis onward, he sees the Lord present in a new and intenser manner. The promised city is still to seek, they will be pilgrims in this world. But there are other pilgrims with them. The present life goes on, but as soon as it becomes a pilgrimage it becomes beautiful. They have

already "come to" the city they seek, though as yet the seeking is different from fruition. There is worship, the gladder for its simplicity and still (as his reminiscences of Old Testament language prove) not severed from the truest worship of ancient Israel. There is charity within the Brotherhood which has all the essence even of the ancient sacrifices now to be given up, for it pleases God. When we remember all that recent scholarship has shewn us of the likeness of this ideal to that of so many within Judaism at that time, we recognize a larger hopefulness in the author's hopeful touches than used to be allowed, without at all diminishing the sublime privilege which he embraces in his "unto Him" and "through Him," or the seriousness of his warning in xii. 15. Certainly he contemplated the beginning of a new and vigorous age, the joy and power of which sprang just from that one conviction, that as far as the present need of His people required the Lord Jesus Christ was coming in His kingdom.

17. Such happiness in the Brotherhood cannot be without discipline; on the other hand good discipline makes for such happiness. Therefore the readers, who are apt to slight authority and good fellowship (cf. vi. 9, x. 25, xii. 14 f.) are bidden to cheer the heart of their superiors by ready and habitual obedience. The reason added, "for this were unprofitable for you," is not a counsel of utilitarianism. The phrase is a *litotes*—an urbane fashion of saying, "that would be bad for every one." The turn of the phrase perhaps implies also that in the day of account the rebellious churchmen will be held responsible for such failure in their officers as that perversity has provoked. But this cannot be pressed.

The Epistle keeps to the rule of Holy Scripture and presumes not to foretell the details of the life to come.

18, 19. Like S. Paul (1 Thess. v. 25; 2 Thess. iii. 1; Col. iv. 3), the author asks for his friends' prayers. Such request would be vain if he were not himself trying in all sincerity to do God's will. He claims that sincerity, but he claims it modestly. As in v. 21, he uses the plural number, associating himself with his brethren. In vi. 9 he had expressed his certainty about the final decision of his friends by employing the perfect *πέπεισμαι*, "I am sure" (cf. Rom. viii. 38, xiv. 14, and Phil. i. 25 with Lightfoot's note); here he writes *πειθομαι*, "I feel a persuasion," "I do indeed think." The repetition of *καλήν*, *καλῶς*, implying not merely "goodness" but "honour" (cf. v. 14, x. 24, xiii. 9) may refer indirectly to the controversy which runs through the Epistle: "I do indeed believe that the course to which I urge you is the honourable course, even though patriotism and old associations point the other way."

Then in v. 19 he changes to the first person singular. He concentrates his request upon his own special need. Where he was; what kept him from the readers, we do not know. We seem to catch a glimpse of danger, of possible martyrdom. And the word he uses for his desired "restoration" is sometimes a solemn one (cf. Acts i. 6, iii. 21); it is almost as though he enlarged his particular request, as soon as made, to the mysterious reach of God's will. Certainly in v. 21 he seems to renounce such particular desires. However that is just the inconsistency which true prayer despises not. Besides there is a difference between a man's own prayer for his friends and their prayer for him, and again his direction of their

prayer. He allows them more than he allows himself, and his restoration to them would be (so his own affection tells him) their most earnest desire.

Where he was and what detained him we do not know. From v. 24 we may perhaps conjecture that he was in Italy. The letter shews that there was a good deal of imprisonment going on, and if his absence was of that forced nature much pathos accrues to these references.

20, 21. Dr. Wickham Legg in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, July 1912, has some "Notes on Collects," in which he shews that certain prayers in 2 Macc. i., Wisd. ix., 1 Macc. iv., and in the Jewish Prayer Book, have the fourfold structure with more or less of the terse convolution of the Western Collects. Perhaps the collect form has been the natural expression of prayer for some minds in all places and ages. Certainly the author uses it in this passage. He has the fourfold structure, with the addition of the pleading of the merits of Christ with which Christian Collects generally end.

A tabular statement will make this plain.

1. Invocation	Now the God of peace,
2. Sentence relative to Invocation	} who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep in the blood of the eternal covenant,
3. Main petition	
4. Secondary petition which often expresses the end for which main petition is made, but here is a parallel accompaniment	} working in us that which is well- pleasing in his sight,
5. Pleading of merits of Christ and doxology (the collect form makes it almost certain that the doxology is to be referred to "Christ" not to "the God of peace")	

This differs from ordinary Collects in that it is a blessing addressed to the readers instead of a prayer directly addressed to God; otherwise the correspondence is exact. It may be contrasted with the prayer of S. Paul in Eph. iii. 14-21. That does indeed so far fit the collect-analysis as to shew how that form, like the scale in music or the sonnet in poetry, shapes itself by certain natural laws, but while S. Paul's words flow freely like the Greek and Eastern liturgical prayers, the author of Hebrews is terse and symmetrical and firm like the Western Collects.

But not only in terseness and symmetry does this prayer differ from S. Paul's. S. Paul had begun his prayer in Ephesians more than once, but had been led away from it to pursue a train of thoughts which a word (as by chance) had started. At last the prayer is completed; it marks a stage in the course of the Epistle, but does not conclude it. The prayer is but one impulse in the impetuous pouring forth of his inspired mind. In this Epistle the prayer is the conclusion of all. It is shaped and placed deliberately, and it sums up and by its "reverence" (cf. xii. 28) intensifies the whole of the long argumentative appeal. In this too it is like a Collect. For whatever be the right derivation of its name, a Collect does commonly sum up teaching or meditation. The Collects in the Roman Missal or the English Prayer Book do so. Still more remarkably do the Collects which follow the several psalms in the Mozarabic Psalter.

In like manner this prayer sums up the doctrine and purpose of the Epistle. But before that can be seen it is necessary (as is done in the table above) to

restore the ancient text in two places where it has been altered in later times. Instead of reading "you" twice in verse 21, "you" must be read in the first clause, "us" in the second. Thus the first clause is recognized as a prayer for the readers; the second for the writer himself, or for the writer and the companions of his sequestration; or again for the writer and all those who like him are united in God's will—those who (as Mr. A. C. Benson once expressed it) "are of the City." Then instead of "in every good work," we must read "in every good thing," as RV translates. Yet that translation obscures the generality of the Greek *ἐν παντὶ ἀγαθῷ*, which is almost an adverbial phrase; "in all good ways," or "by all good means," would perhaps be a better equivalent, though not a translation. The petition is not that the readers may do many things, but that they may do the one duty which is for them, at that time, God's will; in fact the one duty which their friend has been urging upon them all through his letter. That duty may possibly be something unknown to us; on the hypothesis we have allowed ourselves, we may say it is the hard duty of going forth to the Lord Jesus outside the camp, and breaking with the Jewish nationalists. This concentrated application to one single act is emphasized by the aorist, *ποιῆσαι*, as contrasted with the present participle, *ποιῶν*, which follows; *ποιῆσαι* means "to do one act once"; *ποιῶν* means "continuing to do."

Thus we see the writer on his knees before God as he ends his earnest appeal. Keeping the mediaeval text we do not quite see that, but we have instead an edifying prayer for congregational reading; a prayer

of colourless phraseology and therefore capable of wide application. A change of like character was made in the text of the Benedictus, S. Lk. i. 78. The original text gives ἐπισκέψεται, "the dayspring shall visit us." That was what Zacharias said before the ministry of the Lord began. But in the *Psalter with Odes* of Codex Alexandrinus we find that already altered to ἐπεσκέψατο, "has visited us." In the Service Book of later generations who look back upon that ministry, the expectation has been changed into a retrospective confession of faith. Both there and here it would seem that Church use has adapted the apostolic text for the devotional needs of post-apostolic times.

These corrections then made we find a prayer of which the main petition corresponds to the main purpose of the letter, viz. that the readers may do a certain hard duty.

Its secondary petition corresponds to the promise of the letter that such obedience brings peace or "the rest of God." The author has no special request to make for himself; he only asks that God will continue to do with him what is well pleasing in His sight. He has in fact entered that rest where "In la sua voluntad è nostra pace." This is the nearest approach he makes to these unveilings of his own experience which S. Paul so often ventures upon, and this unique breaking of his reticence is the most effective step in his argument. He knows the truth he urges because he has proved it.

This road to peace by duty is the road of God's will, and that corresponds to the interpretation of the whole analogy of the Epistle, which was given in ch. x.

And this road of the will, this losing separate, and

finding personal will in the will of God, is the way of His flesh which Jesus went. That is signified in the second clause of the prayer, "who brought again from the dead . . . the Lord Jesus." Notice the name of His manhood here without addition.

And it led to His being perfected, exalted, hailed Highpriest, and to His entering upon that inheritance of Christhood which is indicated in ch. i. and more fully explained as the Epistle proceeds. That is signified in the final clause with its doxology, in which the name and title are conjoined, "Jesus Christ."

This final clause contains the phrase, "through Jesus Christ," which sums up the author's whole doctrine of priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, a doctrine or analogy which has already been more pictorially expressed in the "blood of the eternal covenant," of the second clause. It implies not merely that the readers are to do as the Lord Jesus did, but that they can do it in that "fellowship with the Christ" (iii. 14) who is for them the divine exalted Jesus Christ. And their opportunity is offered in the trial and crisis of their own troubled times. The antidote to that perturbation, that political and religious confusion, is asserted in the opening of the prayer; "the God of peace" who makes peace in the midst of the restless nations, and has from the beginning of time prepared a "sabbath rest" for His people (iv. 9).

The letter now hastens to its close. In v. 22 the intensity is relieved by a touch (such as has been felt before) of the author's intimate, affectionate urbanity. The conjunction *καὶ γὰρ* is often but a single compound one, a stronger "for." But it may be taken in its

separate parts, "for also," and the context favours this. There will then be a play upon the two meanings of παρακαλῶ, παρακλήσεως, which can hardly be reproduced in English, and the whole sentence is a gentle insistence on the letter being a real letter, not an authoritative treatise which might stiffen the relations between the writer and his friends. "I beseech you, my brothers, bear with this long and severe treatise of exhortation, for you see I do also send a short communication of pure epistolary friendship just for yourselves." The aorist, ἐπέστειλα, is epistolary and in English the present tense must be substituted for it, and the ὑμῖν coming last is perhaps rather emphatic. "How could it be otherwise to you?" it seems to imply.

23. Timothy has been released and the author, if soon joined by him, hopes with Timothy to come to his friends and see them. Why his journey should depend on Timothy's coming, or (understanding him differently) why he could not wait longer for Timothy we do not know. Nor do we know where or why Timothy was imprisoned or detained. Dr. Bacon, in his *Introduction to the New Testament* (dating Hebrews later) says "the suggestion that both the author and his companions 'from Italy' may have been exiled by Domitian is entirely reasonable." It seems hardly less reasonable to hazard the guess that both the author and Timothy may have been brought to Italy by the peril of their master S. Paul—that S. Paul has perished in Nero's persecution, that Timothy has been imprisoned, and that the freedom of both Timothy and the author is now assured.

Bacon interprets the οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας of the next verse as "those who belong to Italy and are now away

from Italy." It is perhaps a little more likely in so idiomatic a writer that it should mean, "those who are in Italy and send their greetings with mine from Italy," but either interpretation is possible.

All that is certainly to be inferred from these verses is that the letter is in some way connected with Italy and that the author belongs more or less intimately to S. Paul's circle. In accordance with that relationship he ends his letter with S. Paul's grace. We might paraphrase, "And now I will say farewell in the hallowed words of one we all know and shall ever love."

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